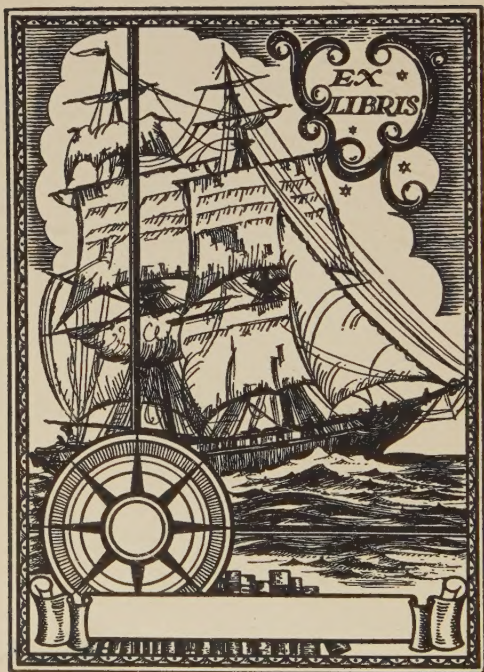
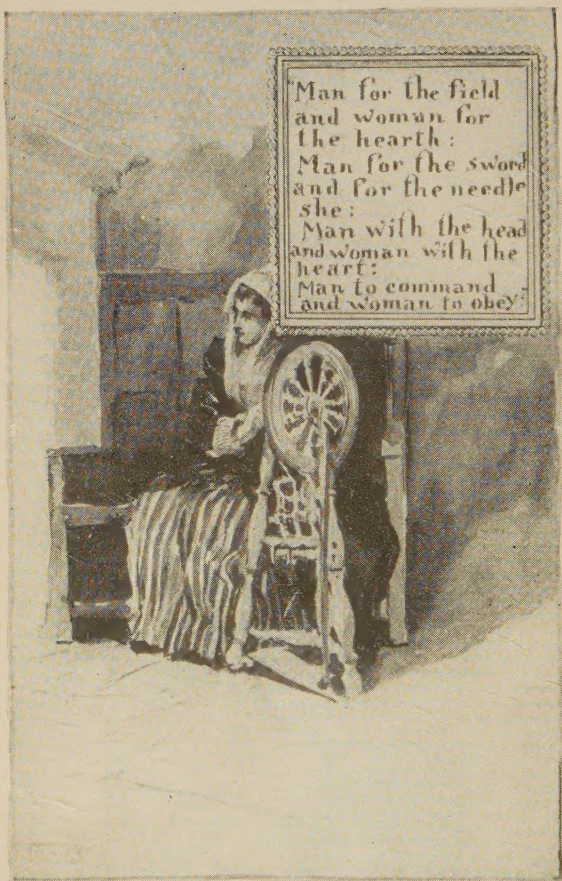


POEMS

TENNYSON







Man for the field
and woman for
the hearth :
Man for the sword
and for the needle
she :
Man with the head
and woman with the
heart :
Man to command
and woman to obey :

The Complete Works

OF

Alfred Lord Tennyson

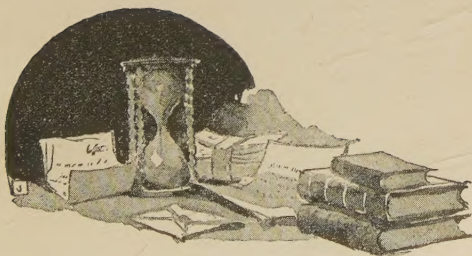
POET LAUREATE

*VIGNETTE EDITION, IN TWO VOLUMES, WITH
NUMEROUS NEW ILLUSTRATIONS*

BY

Charles Howard Johnson

VOLUME I



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TO THE QUEEN.

*Revered, beloved—O you that hold
A nobler office upon earth
Than arms, or power of brain, or
birth
Could give the warrior kings of old,*

*Victoria,—since your Royal grace
To one of less desert allows
This laurel greener from the brows
Of him that utter'd nothing base ;*

*And should your greatness, and the
care
That yokes with empire, yield you
time
To make demand of modern rhyme
If aught of ancient worth be there ;*

*Then—while a sweeter music wakes,
And thro' wild March the throstle
calls,
Where all about your palace-walls
The sun-lit almond-blossom shakes—*

*Take, Madam, this poor book of song ;
For tho' the faults were thick as dust
In vacant chambers, I could trust
Your kindness. May you rule us long,*

*And leave us rulers of your blood
As noble till the latest day !
May children of our children say,
' She wrought her people lasting good ;*

*' Her court was pure ; her life serene ;
God gave her peace ; her land re-
posed ;
A thousand claims to reverence
closed
In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen ;*

*' And statesmen at her council met
Who knew the seasons when to take
Occasion by the hand, and make
The bounds of freedom wider yet*

*' By shaping some august decree,
Which kept her throne unshaken still,
Broad-based upon her people's will,
And compass'd by the inviolate sea.'*

March, 1851.

JUVENILIA.

CLARIBEL.

A MELODY.

I.

WHERE Claribel low-lieth
The breezes pause and die,
Letting the rose-leaves fall :
But the solemn oak-tree sigheth,
Thick-leaved, ambrosial,
With an ancient melody
Of an inward agony,
Where Claribel low-lieth.

II.

At eve the beetle boometh
Athwart the thicket lone :
At noon the wild bee hummeth
About the moss'd headstone :
At midnight the moon cometh,
And looketh down alone.
Her song the lintwhite swelleth,
The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,
The callow throistle lispeth,
The slumbrous wave outwelleth,
The babbling runnel crispeth,
The hollow grot replieth
Where Claribel low-lieth.

NOTHING WILL DIE.

WHEN will the stream be aweary of
flowing
Under my eye ?
When will the wind be aweary of
blowing
Over the sky ?

When will the clouds be aweary of
fleeting ?
When will the heart be aweary of
beating ?
And nature die ?
Never, oh ! never, nothing will die .
The stream flows,
The wind blows,
The cloud fleets,
The heart beats,
Nothing will die.

Nothing will die ;
All things will change
Thro' eternity.
'Tis the world's winter ;
Autumn and summer
Are gone long ago ;
Earth is dry to the centre,
But spring, a new comer,
A spring rich and strange,
Shall make the winds blow
Round and round,
Thro' and thro',
Here and there,
Till the air
And the ground
Shall be fill'd with life anew.

The world was never made ;
It will change, but it will not fade.
So let the wind range ;
For even and morn
Ever will be
Thro' eternity.
Nothing was born ;
Nothing will die ;
All things will change.



"THE SOLEMN OAK-TREE SIGHETH."—Page 2.

ALL THINGS WILL DIE.

CLEARLY the blue river chimes in its
flowing

Under my eye;

Warmly and broadly the south winds
are blowing

Over the sky.

One after another the white clouds are
fleeing;

Every heart this May morning in joy-
ance is beating

Full merrily;

Yet all things must die.

The stream will cease to flow;

The wind will cease to blow;

The clouds will cease to fleet;

The heart will cease to beat;

For all things must die.

All things must die.

Spring will come never more.

Oh! vanity!

Death waits at the door.

See! our friends are all forsaking

The wine and the merrymaking.

We are call'd—we must go.

Laid low, very low,

In the dark we must lie.

The merry glees are still;

The voice of the bird

Shall no more be heard,

Nor the wind on the hill.

Oh! misery!

Hark! death is calling

While I speak to ye,

The jaw is falling,

The red cheek paling,

The strong limbs failing;

Ice with the warm blood mixing;

The eyeballs fixing.

Nine times goes the passing bell:

Ye merry souls, farewell.

↗ The old earth

Had a birth,

As all men know,

Long ago.

And the old earth must die.

So let the warm winds range,

And the blue wave beat the shore;

For even and morn

Ye will never see

Thro' eternity.

All things were born.

Ye will come never more,

For all things must die.

LEONINE ELEGIACS.

LOW-FLOWING breezes are roaming
the broad valley dimm'd in the
gloaming:

Thro' the black-stemm'd pines only
the far river shines.

Creeping thro' blossomy rushes and
bowers of rose-blowing bushes,

Down by the poplar tall rivulets
babble and fall.

Barketh the shepherd-dog cheerly;
the grasshopper carolleteth clearly;

Deeply the wood-dove coos; shrilly
the owlet halloos;

Winds creep; dews fall chilly: in her
first sleep earth breathes stilly:

Over the pools in the burn water-gnats
murmur and mourn.

Sadly the far kine loweth: the glim-
mering water outfloweth:

Twin peaks shadow'd with pine slope
to the dark hyaline.

Low-throned Hesper is stayed between
the two peaks; but the Naiad

Throbbing in mild unrest holds him
beneath in her breast.

The ancient poetess singeth, that Hes-
perus all things bringeth,

Smoothing the wearied mind: bring
me my love, Rosalind.

Thou comest morning or even; she
cometh not morning or even.

False-eyed Hesper, unkind, where is
my sweet Rosalind?

SUPPOSED CONFESSIONS

OF A SECOND-RATE SENSITIVE MIND.

O GOD! my God! have mercy now.

I faint, I fall. Men say that Thou

Didst die for me, for such as *me*,

Patient of ill, and death, and scorn,

And that my sin was as a thorn

Among the thorns that girt Thy brow,
Wounding Thy soul.—That even now,
In this extremest misery
Of ignorance, I should require
A sign! and if a bolt of fire
Would rive the slumbrous summer
noon

While I do pray to Thee alone,
Think my belief would stronger grow!
Is not my human pride brought low?
The boastings of my spirit still?
The joy I had in my freewill
All cold, and dead, and corpse-like
grown?

And what is left to me, but Thou,
And faith in Thee? Men pass me by;
Christians with happy countenances—
And children all seem full of Thee!
And women smile with saint-like
glances

Like Thine own mother's when she
bow'd

Above Thee, on that happy morn
When angels spake to men aloud,
And Thou and peace to earth were
born.

Goodwill to me as well as all—
I one of them: my brothers they:
Brothers in Christ—a world of peace
And confidence, day after day;
And trust and hope till things should
cease,
And then one Heaven receive us all.

How sweet to have a common faith!
To hold a common scorn of death!
And at a burial to hear
The creaking cords which wound and
eat

Into my human heart, whene'er
Earth goes to earth, with grief, not
fear,

With hopeful grief, 'were passing
sweet!

Thrice happy state again to be
The trustful infant on the knee!
Who lets his rosy fingers play
About his mother's neck, and knows
Nothing beyond his mother's eyes.
They comfort him by night and day;
They light his little life away;
He hath no thought of coming woes;

He hath no care of life or death;
Scarce outward signs of joy arise,
Because the Spirit of happiness
And perfect rest so inward is;
And loveth so his innocent heart,
Her temple and her place of birth,
Where she would ever wish to dwell,
Life of the fountain there, beneath
Its salient springs, and far apart,
Hating to wander out on earth,
Or breathe into the hollow air,
Whose chillness would make visible
Her subtil, warm, and golden breath,
Which mixing with the infant's blood,
Fulfil him with beatitude.
Oh! sure it is a special care
Of God, to fortify from doubt,
To arm in proof, and guard about
With triple-mailed trust, and clear
Delight, the infant's dawning year.

Would that my gloomed fancy were
As thine, my mother, when with brows
Propt on thy knees, my hands upheld
In thine, I listen'd to thy vows,
For me outpour'd in holiest prayer—
For me unworthy!—and beheld
Thy mild deep eyes upraised, that knew
The beauty and repose of faith,
And the clear spirit shining thro'.
Oh! wherefore do we grow awry
From roots which strike so deep? why
dare

Paths in the desert? Could not I
Bow myself down, where thou hast knelt,
To the earth—until the ice would melt
Here, and I feel as thou hast felt?
What Devil had the heart to scathe
Flowers thou hadst rear'd—to brush
the dew

From thine own lily, when thy grave
Was deep, my mother, in the clay?
Myself? Is it thus? Myself? Had I
So little love for thee? But why
Prevail'd not thy pure prayers? Why
pray

To one who heeds not, who can save
But will not? Great in faith, and strong
Against the grief of circumstance
Wert thou, and yet unheard. What if
Thou pleadest still, and seest me drive
Thro' utter dark a full-sail'd skiff,
Unpiloted i' the echoing dance

Of reboant whirlwinds, stooping low
Unto the death, not sunk! I know
At matins and at evensong,
That thou, if thou wert yet alive,
In deep and daily prayers would'st
strive

To reconcile me with thy God.
Albeit, my hope is gray, and cold
At heart, thou wouldest murmur still—
'Bring this lamb back into Thy fold,
My Lord, if so it be Thy will.'
Would'st tell me I must brook the rod
And chastisement of human pride;
That pride, the sin of devils, stood
Betwixt me and the light of God!
That hitherto I had defied
And had rejected God—that grace
Would drop from his o'er-brimming
love,

As manna on my wilderness,
If I would pray—that God would
move

And strike the hard, hard rock, and
thence,

Sweet in their utmost bitterness,
Would issue tears of penitence
Which would keep green hope's life.
Alas!

I think that pride hath now no place
Nor sojourn in me. I am void,
Dark, formless, utterly destroyed.

Why not believe then? Why not yet
Anchor thy frailty there, where man
Hath moor'd and rested? Ask the
sea

At midnight, when the crisp slope
waves

After a tempest, rib and fret
The broad-imbased beach, why he
Slumbers not like a mountain tarn?
Wherefore his ridges are not curls
And ripples of an inland mere?
Wherefore he moaneth thus, nor can
Draw down into his vexed pools
All that blue heaven which hues and
paves

The other? I am too forlorn,
Too shaken: my own weakness fools
My judgment, and my spirit whirls,
Moved from beneath with doubt and
fear.

'Yet,' said I, in my morn of youth,
The unsunn'd freshness of my
strength,

When I went forth in quest of truth,
'It is man's privilege to doubt,
If so be that from doubt at length,
Truth may stand forth unmoved of
change,

An image with profulgent brows,
And perfect limbs, as from the storm
Of running fires and fluid range
Of lawless airs, at last stood out
This excellence and solid form
Of constant beauty. For the Ox
Feeds in the herb, and sleeps, or fills
The horned valleys all about,
And hollows of the fringed hills
In summer heats, with placid lows
Unfearing, till his own blood flows
About his hoof. And in the flocks
The lamb rejoiceth in the year,
And raceth freely with his fere,
And answers to his mother's calls
From the flower'd furrow. In a time,
Of which he wots not, run short pains
Thro' his warm heart; and then, from
whence

He knows not, on his light there falls
A shadow; and his native siope,
Where he was wont to leap and climb,
Floats from his sick and filmed eyes,
And something in the darkness draws
His forehead earthward, and he dies.
Shall man live thus, in joy and hope
As a young lamb, who cannot dream,
Living, but that he shall live on?
Shall we not look into the laws
Of life and death, and things that
seem,

And things that be, and analyse
Our double nature, and compare
All creeds till we have found the one,
If one there be?' Ay me! I fear
All may not doubt, but everywhere
Some must clasp Idols. Yet, my God,
Whom call I Idol? Let Thy dove
Shadow me over, and my sins
Be unremember'd, and Thy love
Enlighten me. Oh teach me yet
Somewhat before the heavy clod
Weighs on me, and the busy fret
Of that sharp-headed worm begins
In the gross blackness underneath.

O weary life ! O weary death !
 O spirit and heart made desolate !
 O damned vacillating state !

THE KRAKEN.

BELOW the thunders of the upper
 deep ;
 Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,
 His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded
 sleep
 The Kraken sleepeth : faintest sun-
 lights flee
 About his shadowy sides : above him
 swell
 Huge sponges of millennial growth and
 height ;
 And far away into the sickly light,
 From many a wondrous grot and secret
 cell
 Unnumber'd and enormous polypi
 Winnow with giant arms the slumber-
 ing green.
 There hath he lain for ages and will lie
 Battening upon huge seaworms in his
 sleep,
 Until the latter fire shall heat the
 deep ;
 Then once by man and angels to be
 seen,
 In roaring he shall rise and on the
 surface die.

SONG.

THE winds, as at their hour of birth,
 Leaning upon the ridged sea,
 Breathed low around the rolling earth
 With mellow preludes, ' We are
 free.'

The streams through many a liliated
 row
 Down-carolling to the crisped sea,
 Low-tinkled with a bell-like flow
 Atween the blossoms, ' We are free.'

LILIAN.

I.

AIRY, fairy Lilian,
 Flitting, fairy Lilian,
 When I ask her if she love me,
 Claps her tiny hands above me,
 Laughing all she can ;
 She'll not tell me if she love me,
 Cruel little Lilian.

II.

When my passion seeks
 Pleasance in love-sighs,
 She, looking thro' and thro' me
 Thoroughly to undo me,
 Smiling, never speaks :
 So innocent-arch, so cunning-simple,
 From beneath her gathered wimple
 Glancing with black-beaded eyes,
 Till the lightning laughter dimple
 The baby-roses in her cheeks ;
 Then away she flies.

III.

Prythee weep, May Lilian !
 Gaiety without eclipse
 Wearieth me, May Lilian :
 Thro' my very heart it thrilleth
 When from crimson-threaded lips
 Silver-treble laughter trilleth :
 Prythee weep, May Lilian.

IV.

Praying all I can,
 If prayers will not hush thee,
 Airy Lilian,
 Like a rose-leaf I will crush thee,
 Fairy Lilian.

ISABEL.

I.

EYES not down-dropt nor over-bright,
 but fed
 With the clear-pointed flame of
 chastity,
 Clear, without heat, undying, tended
 by



"I WOULD THAT I WERE DEAD!"—*Page 7*

Pure vestal thoughts in the translucent fane
Of her still spirit; locks not wide-dispread,
Madonna-wise on either side her head;
Sweet lips whereon perpetually did reign
The summer calm of golden charity,
Were fixed shadows of thy fixed mood,
Revered Isabel, the crown and head,
The stately flower of female fortitude,
Of perfect wifehood and pure lowlihead.

II.

The intuitive decision of a bright
And thorough-edged intellect to part
Error from crime; a prudence to withhold;
The laws of marriage character'd in gold
Upon the blanch'd tablets of her heart;
A love still burning upward, giving light
To read those laws; an accent very low
In blandishment, but a most silver flow
Of subtle-paced counsel in distress,
Right to the heart and brain, tho' undescried,
Winning its way with extreme gentleness
Thro' all the outworks of suspicious pride;
A courage to endure and to obey;
A hate of gossip parlance, and of sway,
Crown'd Isabel, thro' all her placid life,
The queen of marriage, a most perfect wife.

III.

The mellow'd reflex of a winter moon;
A clear stream flowing with a muddy one,
Till in its onward current it absorbs
With swifter movement and in purer light

The vexed eddies of its wayward brother:
A leaning and upbearing parasite,
Clothing the stem, which else had fallen quite
With cluster'd flower-bells and ambrosial orbs
Of rich fruit-bunches leaning on each other—
Shadow forth thee:—the world hath not another
(Tho' all her fairest forms are types of thee,
And thou of God in thy great charity)
Of such a finish'd chasten'd purity.

MARIANA.

'Mariana in the moated grange.'

Measure for Measure.

WITH blackest moss the flower-plots
Were thickly crusted, one and all:
The rusted nails fell from the knots
That held the pear to the gable-wall.
The broken sheds look'd sad and strange:
Unlifted was the clinking latch;
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange.
She only said, 'My life is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said;
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!'

Her tears fell with the dews at even;
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried;
She could not look on the sweet heaven,
Either at morn or eventide.
After the flitting of the bats,
When thickest dark did trance the sky,
She drew her casement-curtain by,
And glanced athwart the glooming flats.
She only said, 'The night is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said;
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!'

Upon the middle of the night,
Waking she heard the night-fowl
crow :

The cock sung out an hour ere light :
From the dark fen the oxen's low
Came to her : without hope of change,
In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed
morn

About the lonely moated grange.
She only said, 'The day is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said ;
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead !'

About a stone-cast from the wall
A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,
And o'er it many, round and small,
The cluster'd marsh-mosses crept.
Hard by a poplar shook alway,
All silver-green with gnarled bark :
For leagues no other tree did mark
The level waste, the rounding gray.
She only said, 'My life is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said ;
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead !'

And ever when the moon was low,
And the shrill winds were up and
away,
In the white curtain, to and fro,
She saw the gusty shadow sway.
But when the moon was very low,
And wild winds bound within their
cell,
The shadow of the poplar fell
Upon her bed, across her brow.
She only said, 'The night is
dreary,
He cometh not,' she said ;
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead !'

All day within the dreamy house,
The doors upon their hinges
creak'd ;
The blue fly sung in the pane ; the
mouse
Behind the mouldering wainscot
shriek'd,
Or from the crevice peer'd about.

Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
Old voices called her from without.

She only said, 'My life is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said ;
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead !'

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
The slow clock ticking, and the
sound

Which to the wooing wind aloof
The poplar made, did all confound
Her sense ; but most she loathed the
hour

When the thick-moted sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping toward his western
bower.

Then, said she, 'I am very dreary,
He will not come,' she said ;
She wept, 'I am aweary, aweary,
Oh God, that I were dead !'

TO —.

I.

CLEAR-HEADED friend, whose joyful
scorn,
Edged with sharp laughter, cuts
atwain
The knots that tangle human
creeds,
The wounding cords that bind and
strain
The heart until it bleeds,
Ray-fringed eyelids of the morn
Roof not a glance so keen as
thine :
If aught of prophecy be mine,
Thou wilt not live in vain.

II.

Low-cowering shall the Sophist sit ;
Falsehood shall bare her plaited
brow ;
Fair-fronted Truth shall droop not
now
With shrilling shafts of subtle wit.
Nor martyr flames, nor trenchant
swords



"WHEN MERRY MILKMAIDS CLICK THE LATCH. - *Page 9.*

Can do away that ancient lie;
A gentler death shall Falsehood die,
Shot thro' and thr'o with cunning
words.

III.

Weak Truth a-leaning on her crutch,
Wan, wasted Truth in her utmost
need,
Thy kingly intellect shall feed,
Until she be an athlete bold,
And weary with a finger's touch
Those writhed limbs of lightning
speed;
Like that strange angel which of old,
Until the breaking of the light,
Wrestled with wandering Israel,
Past Yabbok brook the livelong
night,
And heaven's mazed signs stood still
In the dim tract of Penue!

MADELINE.

I.

THOU art not steep'd in golden lan-
guors,
No tranced summer calm is thine,
Ever varying Madeline.
Thro' light and shadow thou dost
range,
Sudden glances, sweet and strange,
Delicious spites and darling angers,
And airy forms of flitting change.

II.

Smiling, frowning, evermore,
Thou art perfect in love-lore.
Revealings deep and clear are thine
Of wealthy smiles: but who may
know
Whether smile or frown be fleeter?
Whether smile or frown be sweeter,
Who may know?
Frowns perfect-sweet along the brow
Light-glooming over eyes divine,
Like little clouds sun-fringed, are
thine,
Ever varying Madeline.

Thy smile and frown are not aloof
From one another,
Each to each is dearest brother;
Hues of the silken sheeny woof
Momently shot into each other.
All the mystery is thine;
Smiling, frowning, evermore,
Thou art perfect in love-lore,
Ever varying Madeline.

III.

A subtle, sudden flame,
By veering passion fann'd,
About thee breaks and dances;
When I would kiss thy hand,
The flush of anger'd shame
O'erflows thy calmer glances,
And o'er black brows drops down
A sudden-curved frown:
But when I turn away,
Thou, willing me to stay,
Wooest not, nor vainly wranglest;
But, looking fixedly the while,
All my bounding heart entanglest
In a golden-netted smile;
Then in madness and in bliss,
If my lips should dare to kiss
Thy taper fingers amorously,
Again thou blushest angerly;
And o'er black brows drops down
A sudden-curved frown.

SONG—THE OWL.

I.

WHEN cats run home and light is
come,
And dew is cold upon the ground,
And the far-off stream is dumb,
And the whirring sail goes round,
And the whirring sail goes round;
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.

II.

When merry milkmaids click the
latch,
And rarely smells the new-mown
hay,
And the cock hath sung beneath the
thatch

Twice or thrice his roundelay,
 Twice or thrice his roundelay;
 Alone and warming his five wits,
 The white owl in the belfry sits.

SECOND SONG.

TO THE SAME.

I.

THY tuwhits are lull'd, I wot,
 Thy tuwhoos of yesternight,
 Which upon the dark afloat,
 So took echo with delight,
 So took echo with delight,
 That her voice untuneful grown,
 Wears all day a fainter tone.

II.

I would mock thy chant anew ;
 But I cannot mimick it ;
 Not a whit of thy tuwhoo,
 Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,
 Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,
 With a lengthen'd loud halloo,
 Tuwhoo, tuwhit, tuwhit, tu-
 whoo-o-o.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS.

WHEN the breeze of a joyful dawn
 blew free
 In the silken sail of infancy,
 The tide of time flow'd back with me,
 The forward-flowing tide of time ;
 And many a sheeny summer-morn,
 Adown the Tigris I was borne,
 By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,
 High-walled gardens green and old ;
 True Mussulman was I and sworn,
 For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Anight my shallop, rustling thro'
 The low and bloomed foliage, drove
 The fragrant, glistening deeps, and
 clove
 The citron-shadows in the blue :
 By garden porches on the brim,

The costly doors flung open wide,
 Gold glittering thro' lamplight dim,
 And broider'd sofas on each side :
 In sooth it was a goodly time,
 For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Often, where clear-stemm'd platans
 guard
 The outlet, did I turn away
 The boat-head down a broad canal
 From the main river sluiced, where all
 The sloping of the moon-lit sward
 Was damask-work, and deep inlay
 Of braided blooms unmown, which
 crept
 Adown to where the water slept.
 A goodly place, a goodly time,
 For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

A motion from the river won
 Ridged the smooth level, bearing on
 My shallop thro' the star-strown calm,
 Until another night in night
 I enter'd, from the clearer light,
 Imbower'd vaults of pillar'd palm,
 Imprisoning sweets, which, as they
 clomb
 Heavenward, were stay'd beneath the
 dome
 Of hollow boughs.—A goodly time,
 For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Still onward ; and the clear canal
 Is rounded to as clear a lake.
 From the green rivage many a fall
 Of diamond rillels musical,
 Thro' little crystal arches low
 Down from the central fountain's flow
 Fall'n silver-chiming, seemed to shake
 The sparkling flints beneath the prow.
 A goodly place, a goodly time,

For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.
 Above thro' many a bowery turn
 A walk with vary-color'd shells
 Wander'd engrain'd. On either side
 All round about the fragrant marge
 From fluted vase, and brazen urn
 In order, eastern flowers large,

Some dropping low their crimson
bells
Half-closed, and others studded wide
With disks and tiars, fed the time
With odor in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Far off, and where the lemon grove
In closest coverture upsprung,
The living airs of middle night
Died round the bulbul as he sung ;
Not he : but something which pos-
sess'd
The darkness of the world, delight,
Life, anguish, death, immortal love,
Ceasing not, mingled, unexpress'd,
Apart from place, withholding time,
But flattering the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Black the garden-bowers and grots
Slumber'd : the solemn palms were
ranged
Above, unwoo'd of summer wind :
A sudden splendor from behind
Flush'd all the leaves with rich gold-
green,
And, flowing rapidly between
Their interspaces, counterchanged
The level lake with diamond-plots
Of dark and bright. A lovely time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,
Distinct with vivid stars inlaid,
Grew darker from that under-flame :
So, leaping lightly from the boat,
With silver anchor left afloat,
In marvel whence that glory came
Upon me, as in sleep I sank
In cool soft turf upon the bank,
Entranced with that place and time,
So worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Thence thro' the garden I was
drawn—
A realm of pleasance, many a mound,
And many a shadow-chequer'd lawn
Full of the city's stilly sound,
And deep myrrh-thickets blowing
round

The stately cedar, tamarisks,
Thick rosaries of scented thorn,
Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks
Graven with emblems of the time,
In honor of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

With dazed vision unawares
From the long alley's latticed shade
Emerged, I came upon the great
Pavilion of the Caliphat.
Right to the carven cedarn doors,
Flung inward over spangled floors,
Broad-based flights of marble stairs
Ran up with golden balustrade,
After the fashion of the time,
And humor of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

The fourscore windows all alight
As with the quintessence of flame,
A million tapers flaring bright
From twisted silvers look'd to shame
The hollow-vaulted dark, and stream'd
Upon the mooned domes aloof
In inmost Bagdat, till there seem'd
Hundreds of crescents on the roof
Of night new-risen, that marvellous
time
To celebrate the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Then stole I up, and trancedly
Gazed on the Persian girl alone,
Serene with argent-lidded eyes
Amorous, and lashes like to rays
Of darkness, and a brow of pearl
Tressed with redolent ebony,
In many a dark delicious curl,
Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone ;
The sweetest lady of the time,
Well worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either side,
Pure silver, underpropt a rich
Throne of the massive ore, from
which
Down-droop'd, in many a floating
fold,
Engarlanded and diaper'd
With inwrought flowers, a cloth of
gold.

Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirr'd
 With merriment of kingly pride,
 Sole star of all that place and time,
 I saw him—in his golden prime,
 THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID.

ODE TO MEMORY.

ADDRESSED TO —.

I.

THOU who stealest fire,
 From the fountains of the past,
 To glorify the present; oh, haste,
 Visit my low desire!
 Strengthen me, enlighten me!
 I faint in this obscurity,
 Thou dewy dawn of memory.

II.

Come not as thou camest of late,
 Flinging the gloom of yesternight
 On the white day; but robed in soft-
 en'd light
 Of orient state.
 Whilome thou camest with the morn-
 ing mist,
 Even as a maid, whose stately brow
 The dew-impearled winds of dawn
 have kiss'd,
 When, she, as thou,
 Stays on her floating locks the lovely
 freight
 Of overflowing blooms, and earliest
 shoots
 Of orient green, giving safe pledge of
 fruits,
 Which in wintertide shall star
 The black earth with brilliance rare.

III.

Whilome thou camest with the morn-
 ing mist,
 And with the evening cloud,
 Showering thy gleaned wealth into
 my open breast
 (Those peerless flowers which in the
 rudest wind
 Never grow sere,

When rooted in the garden of the
 mind,
 Because they are the earliest of the
 year).

Nor was the night thy shroud.
 In sweet dreams softer than unbroken
 rest

Thou leddest by the hand thine infant
 Hope.

The eddying of her garments caught
 from thee

The light of thy great presence; and
 the cope

Of the half-attain'd futurity,

Tho' deep not fathomless,

Was cloven with the million stars
 which tremble

O'er the deep mind of dauntless in-
 fancy.

Small thought was there of life's dis-
 tress;

For sure she deem'd no mist of earth
 could dull

Those spirit-thrilling eyes so keen
 and beautiful:

Sure she was nigher to heaven's
 spheres,

Listening the lordly music flowing
 from

The illimitable years.

O strengthen me, enlighten me!

I faint in this obscurity,

Thou dewy dawn of memory.

IV.

Come forth, I charge thee, arise,
 Thou of the many tongues, the myriad
 eyes!

Thou comest not with shows of flaunt-
 ing vines

Unto mine inner eye,

Divinest Memory!

Thou wert not nursed by the water-
 fall

Which ever sounds and shines

A pillar of white light upon the
 wall

Of purple cliffs, aloof descried:

Come from the woods that belt the
 gray hill-side,

The seven elms, the poplars four

That stand beside my father's door,



And chiefly from the brook that loves
To purl o'er matted cress and ribbed
sand,

Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves,
Drawing into his narrow earthen urn,
In every elbow and turn,

The filter'd tribute of the rough wood-
land,

O! hither lead thy feet!

Pour round mine ears the livelong
bleat

Of the thick-fleeced sheep from wat-
tled folds,

Upon the ridged wolds,

When the first matin-song hath wak-
en'd loud

Over the dark dewy earth forlorn,

What time the amber morn

Forth gushes from beneath a low-
hung cloud.

v.

Large dowries doth the raptured eye

To the young spirit present

When first she is wed;

And like a bride of old

In triumph led,

With music and sweet showers

Of festal flowers,

Unto the dwelling she must sway.

Well hast thou done, great artist
Memory,

In setting round thy first experiment

With royal frame-work of
wrought gold;

Needs must thou dearly love thy first
essay,

And foremost in thy various gallery

Place it, where sweetest sunlight
falls

Upon the storied walls;

For the discovery

And newness of thine art so pleased
thee,

That all which thou hast drawn of
fairest

Or boldest since, but lightly weighs

With thee unto the love thou bearest

The first-born of thy genius. Artist-
like,

Ever retiring thou dost gaze

On the prime labor of thine early days:

No matter what the sketch might be;
Whether the high field on the bushless
Pike,

Or even a sand-built ridge

Of heaped hills that mound the sea,

Overblown with murmurs harsh,

Or even a lowly cottage whence we see
Stretch'd wide and wild the waste
enormous marsh,

Where from the frequent bridge,

Like emblems of infinity,

The trenched waters run from sky to
sky;

Or a garden bower'd close

With plaited alleys of the trailing
rose,

Long alleys falling down to twilight
grots,

Or opening upon level plots

Of crowned lilies, standing near

Purple-spiked lavender:

Whither in after life retired

From brawling storms,

From weary wind,

With youthful fancy re-inspired,

We may hold converse with all
forms

Of the many-sided mind,

And those whom passion hath not
blinded,

Subtle-thoughted, myriad-minded.

My friend, with you to live alone,

Were how much better than to own

A crown, a sceptre, and a throne!

O strengthen me, enlighten me!

I faint in this obscurity,

Thou dewy dawn of memory.

SONG.

I.

A SPIRIT haunts the year's last hours

Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers:

To himself he talks;

For at eventide, listening earnestly,

At his work you may hear him sob
and sigh

In the walks;

Earthward he boweth the heavy stalks
 Of the mouldering flowers :
 Heavily hangs the broad sun-flower
 Over its grave i' the earth so chilly ;
 Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
 Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

II.

The air is damp, and hush'd, and close,
 As a sick man's room when he taketh repose
 An hour before death ;
 My very heart faints and my whole soul grieves
 At the moist, rich smell of the rotting leaves,
 And the breath
 Of the fading edges of box beneath,
 And the year's last rose.
 Heavily hangs the broad sun-flower
 Over its grave i' the earth so chilly ;
 Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
 Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

A CHARACTER.

WITH a half-glance upon the sky
 At night he said, 'The wanderings
 Of this most intricate Universe
 Teach me the nothingness of things
 Yet could not all creation pierce
 Beyond the bottom of his eye.

He spake of beauty : that the dull
 Saw no divinity in grass,
 Life in dead stones, or spirit in air ;
 Then looking as 'twere in a glass,
 He smooth'd his chin and sleek'd his hair,
 And said the earth was beautiful.

He spake of virtue : not the gods
 More purely, when they wish to charm
 Pallas and Juno sitting by :

And with a sweeping of the arm,
 And a lack-lustre dead-blue eye,
 Devolved his rounded periods.

Most delicately hour by hour
 He canvass'd human mysteries,
 And trod on silk, as if the winds
 Blew his own praises in his eyes,
 And stood aloof from other minds
 In impotence of fancied power.

With lips depress'd as he were meek,
 Himself unto himself he sold :
 Upon himself himself did feed :
 Quiet, dispassionate and cold,
 And other than his form of creed,
 With chisell'd features clear and sleek.

THE POET.

THE poet in a golden clime was born,
 With golden stars above ;
 Dower'd with the hate of hate, the
 scorn of scorn,
 The love of love.

He saw thro' life and death, thro'
 good and ill,
 He saw thro' his own soul.
 The marvel of the everlasting will,
 An open scroll,

Before him lay : with echoing feet he
 threaded
 The secretest walks of fame :
 The viewless arrows of his thoughts
 were headed
 And wing'd with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his sil-
 ver tongue,
 And of so fierce a flight,
 From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung,
 Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds
 which bore
 Them earthward till they lit ;
 Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field
 flower,
 The fruitful wit



"THE POET."—Page 14.

Cleaving, took root, and springing
 forth anew
 Where'er they fell, behold,
 Like to the mother plant in semblance,
 grew
 A flower all gold,

And bravely furnish'd all abroad to
 fling
 The winged shafts of truth,
 To throng with stately blooms the
 breathing spring
 Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs
 with beams,
 Tho' one did fling the fire.
 Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many
 dreams
 Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth,
 the world
 Like one great garden show'd,
 And thro' the wreaths of floating dark
 upcurl'd,
 Rare sunrise flow'd.

And Freedom rear'd in that august
 sunrise
 Her beautiful bold brow,
 When rites and forms before his burn-
 ing eyes
 Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her maiden
 robes
 Sunn'd by those orient skies;
 But round about the circles of the
 globes
 Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced
 in flame
 WISDOM, a name to shake
 All evil dreams of power—a sacred
 name.
 And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they
 ran,
 And as the lightning to the thun-
 der

Which follows it, riving the spirit of
 man,
 Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words.
 No sword
 Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,
 But one poor poet's scroll, and with
his word
 She shook the world.

THE POET'S MIND.

I.

VEX not thou the poet's mind
 With thy shallow wit :
 Vex not thou the poet's mind ;
 For thou canst not fathom it.
 Clear and bright it should be ever,
 Flowing like a crystal river ;
 Bright as light, and clear as wind.

II.

Dark-brow'd sophist, come not naear ;
 All the place is holy ground ;
 Hollow smile and frozen sneer
 Come not here.
 Holy water will I pour
 Into every spicy flower
 Of the laurel-shrubs that hedge it
 around.
 The flowers would faint at your cruel
 cheer.

In your eye there is death,
 There is frost in your breath
 Which would blight the plants.
 Where you stand you cannot hear
 From the groves within
 The wild-bird's din.

In the heart of the garden the merry
 bird chants.
 It would fall to the ground if you came
 in.

In the middle leaps a fountain
 Like sheet lightning,
 Ever brightening
 With a low melodious thunder ;
 All day and all night it is ever drawn
 From the brain of the purple moun-
 tain

Which stands in the distance yonder :
 It springs on a level of bowery lawn,
 And the mountain draws it from
 Heaven above,
 And it sings a song of undying love ;
 And yet, tho' its voice be so clear and full,
 You never would hear it ; your ears
 are so dull ;
 So keep where you are : you are foul
 with sin ;
 It would shrink to the earth if you
 came in.

THE SEA-FAIRIES.

SLOW sail'd the weary mariners and saw,
 Betwixt the green brink and the running foam,
 Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms prest
 To little harps of gold ; and while they mused
 Whispering to each other half in fear,
 Shrill music reach'd them on the middle sea.

 Whither away, whither away, whither
 away ? fly no more.
 Whither away from the high green field,
 and the happy blossoming shore ?
 Day and night to the billow the fountain calls :
 Down shower the gambolling water-falls
 From wandering over the lea :
 Out of the live-green heart of the dells
 They freshen the silvery-crimson shells,
 And thick with white bells the clover-hill swells
 High over the full-toned sea ;
 O hither, come hither and furl your
 sails,
 Come hither to me and to me :
 Hither, come hither and frolic and play ;

Here it is only the mew that wails ;
 We will sing to you all the day :
 Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,
 For here are the blissful downs and dales,
 And merrily, merrily carol the gales,
 And the spangle dances in bight and bay,
 And the rainbow forms and flies on the land
 Over the islands free ;
 And the rainbow lives in the curve of the sand ;
 Hither, come hither and see ;
 And the rainbow hangs on the poising wave,
 And sweet is the color of cove and cave,
 And sweet shall your welcome be :
 O hither, come hither, and be our lords,
 For merry brides are we :
 We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak sweet words :
 O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
 With pleasure and love and jubilee :
 O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
 When the sharp clear twang of the golden chords
 Runs up the ridged sea.
 Who can light on as happy a shore
 All the world o'er, all the world o'er ?
 Whither away ? listen and stay : mariner,
 mariner, fly no more.

THE DESERTED HOUSE.

I.

LIFE and Thought have gone away
 Side by side,
 Leaving door and windows wide :
 Careless tenants they !

II.

All within is dark as night :
 In the windows is no light ;
 And no murmur at the door,
 So frequent on its hinge before.



"THE DARK DESERTED HOUSE. —Page 17.

III.

Close the door, the shutters close,
Or thro' the windows we shall see
The nakedness and vacancy
Of the dark deserted house.

IV.

Come away: no more of mirth
Is here or merry-making sound.
The house was builded of the earth,
And shall fall again to ground.

V.

Come away: for Life and Thought
Here no longer dwell;
But in a city glorious—
A great and distant city—have bought
A mansion incorruptible.
Would they could have stayed with
us!

THE DYING SWAN.

I.

THE plain was grassy, wild and bare,
Wide, wild, and open to the air,
Which had built up everywhere
An under-roof of doleful gray.
With an inner voice the river ran,
Adown it floated a dying swan,
And loudly did lament.
It was the middle of the day.
Ever the weary wind went on,
And took the reed-tops as it went.

II.

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,
And white against the cold-white sky,
Shone out their crowning snows.
One willow over the river wept,
And shook the wave as the wind did
sigh;
Above in the wind was the swallow,
Chasing itself at its own wild
will,
And far thro' the marish green
and still

The tangled water-courses slept,
Shot over with purple, and green, and
yellow.

III.

The wild swan's death-hymn took the
soul
Of that waste place with joy
Hidden in sorrow: at first to the ear
The warble was low, and full and
clear;
And floating about the under-sky,
Prevailing in weakness, the coronach
stole
Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear;
But anon her awful jubilant voice,
With a music strange and manifold,
Flow'd forth on a carol free and bold;
As when a mighty people rejoice
With shawms, and with cymbals, and
harps of gold,
And the tumult of their acclaim is
roll'd
Thro' the open gates of the city afar,
To the shepherd who watcheth the
evening star.
And the creeping mosses and clamber-
ing weeds,
And the willow-branches hoar and
dank,
And the wavy swell of the souging
reeds,
And the wave-worn horns of the
echoing bank,
And the silvery marish-flowers that
throng
The desolate creeks and pools among,
Were flooded over with eddying song.

A DIRGE.

I.

Now is done thy long day's work;
Fold thy palms across thy breast,
Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest.
Let them rave.
Shadows of the silver birk
Sweep the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

II.

Thee nor carketh care nor slander ;
Nothing but the small cold worm
Fretteth thine enshrouded form.

Let them rave.

Light and shadow ever wander
O'er the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

III.

Thou wilt not turn upon thy bed ;
Chanteth not the brooding bee
Sweeter tones than calumny ?

Let them rave.

Thou wilt never raise thine head
From the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

IV.

Crocodiles wept tears for thee ;
The woodbine and eglare
Drip sweeter dews than traitor's tear.

Let them rave.

Rain makes music in the tree
O'er the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

V.

Round thee blow, self-pleached deep,
Bramble roses, faint and pale,
And long purples of the dale.

Let them rave.

These in every shower creep
Thro' the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

VI.

The gold-eyed kingcups fine,
The frail bluebell peereth over
Rare broidry of the purple clover.

Let them rave.

Kings have no such couch as thine,
As the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

VII.

Wild words wander here and there :
God's great gift of speech abused
Makes thy memory confused :
But let them rave.

The balm-cricket carols clear
In the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

LOVE AND DEATH.

WHAT time the mighty moon was
gathering light
Love paced the thymy plots of Para-
dise,
And all about him roll'd his lustrous
eyes ;
When, turning round a cassia, full in
view,
Death, walking all alone beneath a
yew,
And talking to himself, first met his
sight :
' You must begone,' said Death,
' these walks are mine.'
Love wept and spread his sheeny vans
for flight ;
Yet ere he parted said, ' This hour is
thine :
Thou art the shadow of life, and as
the tree
Stands in the sun and shadows all be-
neath,
So in the light of great eternity
Life eminent creates the shade of
death ;
The shadow passeth when the tree
shall fall,
But I shall reign for ever over all.'

THE BALLAD OF ORIANA.

My heart is wasted with my woe,
Oriana.
There is no rest for me below,
Oriana.
When the long dun wolds are ribb'd
with snow,
And loud the Norland whirlwinds
blow,
Oriana,
Alone I wander to and fro,
Oriana.

Ere the light on dark was growing,
Oriana,
At midnight the cock was crowing,
Oriana :
Winds were blowing, waters flowing,
We heard the steeds to battle going,
Oriana ;
Aloud the hollow bugle blowing,
Oriana.

In the yew-wood black as night,
Oriana,
Ere I rode into the fight,
Oriana,
While blissful tears blinded my sight
By star-shine and by moonlight,
Oriana,
I to thee my troth did plight,
Oriana.

She stood upon the castle wall,
Oriana :
She watch'd my crest among them all,
Oriana :
She saw me fight, she heard me call,
When forth there stept a foeman tall,
Oriana,
Atween me and the castle wall,
Oriana.

The bitter arrow went aside,
Oriana :
The false, false arrow went aside,
Oriana :
The damned arrow glanced aside,
And pierced thy heart, my love, my
bride,
Oriana !
Thy heart, my life, my love, my bride,
Oriana !

Oh ! narrow, narrow was the space,
Oriana.
Loud, loud rung out the bugle's brays,
Oriana.
Oh ! deathful stabs were dealt apace,
The battle deepen'd in its place,
Oriana ;
But I was down upon my face,
Oriana.

They should have stabb'd me where I
lay,
Oriana !

How could I rise and come away,
Oriana ?
How could I look upon the day ?
They should have stabb'd me where I
lay,
Oriana
They should have trod me into clay,
Oriana.

O breaking heart that will not break,
Oriana !
O pale, pale face so sweet and meek,
Oriana !
Thou smilest, but thou dost not speak,
And then the tears run down my
cheek,
Oriana :
What wanstest thou ? whom dost thou
seek,
Oriana ?

I cry aloud : none hear my cries,
Oriana.
Thou comest atween me and the skies,
Oriana.
I feel the tears of blood arise
Up from my heart unto my eyes,
Oriana.
Within thy heart my arrow lies,
Oriana.

O cursed hand ! O cursed blow !
Oriana !
O happy thou that liest low,
Oriana !
All night the silence seems to flow
Beside me in my utter woe,
Oriana.
A weary, weary way I go,
Oriana.

When Norland winds pipe down the
sea,
Oriana,
I walk, I dare not think of thee,
Oriana.
Thou liest beneath the greenwood
tree,
I dare not die and come to thee,
Oriana.
I hear the roaring of the sea,
Oriana.

CIRCUMSTANCE.

Two children in two neighbor villages
Playing mad pranks along the healthy
leas;

Two strangers meeting at a festival;
Two lovers whispering by an orchard
wall;

Two lives bound fast in one with
golden ease;

Two graves grass-green beside a gray
church-tower,

Wash'd with still rains and daisy blossomed;

Two children in one hamlet born and
bred;

So runs the round of life from hour to
hour.

THE MERMAN.

I.

WHO would be
A merman bold,
Sitting alone,
Singing alone
Under the sea,
With a crown of gold,
On a throne?

II.

I would be a merman bold,
I would sit and sing the whole of the
day;

I would fill the sea-halls with a voice
of power;

But at night I would roam abroad and
play

With the mermaids in and out of the
rocks,

Dressing their hair with the white sea-
flower;

And holding them back by their flow-
ing locks

I would kiss them often under the sea,
And kiss them again till they kiss'd
me

Laughingly, laughingly;
And then we would wander away,
away

To the pale-green sea-groves straight
and high,
Chasing each other merrily.

III.

There would be neither moon nor star;
But the wave would make music above
us afar—

Low thunder and light in the magic
night—

Neither moon nor star.

We would call aloud in the dreamy
dells,

Call to each other and whoop and cry
All night, merrily, merrily;

They would pelt me with starry span-
gles and shells,

Laughing and clapping their hands
between,

All night, merrily, merrily:

But I would throw to them back in
mine

Turkis and agate and almondine:
Then leaping out upon them unseen
I would kiss them often under the sea,
And kiss them again till they kiss'd
me

Laughingly, laughingly.

Oh! what a happy life were mine
Under the hollow-hung ocean green!
Soft are the moss-beds under the sea;
We would live merrily, merrily.

THE MERMAID.

I.

WHO would be
A mermaid fair,
Singing alone,
Combing her hair
Under the sea,
In a golden curl
With a comb of pearl,
On a throne?

II.

I would be a mermaid fair;
I would sing to myself the whole of
the day;

With a comb of pearl I would comb
my hair;
And still as I comb'd I would sing
and say,
' Who is it loves me? who loves not
me? '
I would comb my hair till my ringlets
would fall

Low adown, low adown,
From under my starry sea-bud crown
Low adown and around,
And I should look like a fountain of
gold

Springing alone
With a shrill inner sound,
Over the throne
In the midst of the hall;
Till that great sea-snake under the sea
From his coiled sleeps in the central
deeps
Would slowly trail himself sevenfold
Round the hall where I sate, and look
in at the gate

With his large calm eyes for the love
of me.

And all the mermen under the sea
Would feel their immortality
Die in their hearts for the love of me.

III.

But at night I would wander away,
away,

I would fling on each side my low-
flowing locks,
And lightly vault from the throne and
play

With the mermen in and out of the
rocks;

We would run to and fro, and hide
and seek,

On the broad sea-wolds in the crim-
son shells,

Whose silvery spikes are nighest
the sea.

But if any came near I would call, and
shriek,

And adown the steep like a wave I
would leap

From the diamond-ledges that jut
from the dells;

For I would not be kiss'd by all who
would list,

Of the bold merry mermen under the
sea;

They would sue me, and woo me, and
flatter me,

In the purple twilights under the sea;
But the king of them all would carry
me,

Woo me, and win me, and marry me,
In the branching jaspers under the sea;

Then all the dry pied things that be
In the hueless mosses under the sea

Would curl round my silver feet
silently,

All looking up for the love of me.
And if I should carol aloud, from aloft

All things that are forked, and horned,
and soft

Would lean out from the hollow sphere
of the sea,

All looking down for the love of me.

ADELINE.

I.

MYSTERY of mysteries,
Faintly smiling Adeline,
Scarce of earth nor all divine,
Nor unhappy, nor at rest,
But beyond expression fair
With thy floating flaxen hair;
Thy rose-lips and full blue eyes
Take the heart from out my
breast.

Wherefore those dim looks of thine,
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?

II.

Whence that aery bloom of thine,
Like a lily which the sun
Looks thro' in his sad decline,
And a rose-bush leans upon,
Thou that faintly smilest still,
As a Naiad in a well,
Looking at the set of day,
Or a phantom two hours old
Of a maiden past away,
Ere the placid lips be cold?
Wherefore those faint smiles of
thine,
Spiritual Adeline?

III.

What hope or fear or joy is thine?
 Who talketh with thee, Adeline?
 For sure thou art not all alone.
 Do beating hearts of salient
 springs
 Keep measure with thine own?
 Hast thou heard the butterflies
 What they say betwixt their
 wings?
 Or in stillest evenings
 With what voice the violet woos
 To his heart the silver dew?
 Or when little airs arise,
 How the merry bluebell rings
 To the mosses underneath?
 Hast thou look'd upon the
 breath
 Of the lilies at sunrise?
 Wherefore that faint smile of thine,
 Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?

IV.

Some honey-converse feeds thy mind,
 Some spirit of a crimson rose
 In love with thee forgets to close
 His curtains, wasting odorous sighs
 All night long on darkness blind.
 What aileth thee? whom waitest thou
 With thy soften'd, shadow'd brow,
 And those dew-lit eyes of thine,
 Thou faint smiler, Adeline?

V.

Lovest thou the doleful wind
 When thou gazest at the skies?
 Doth the low-tongued Orient
 Wander from the side of the
 morn,
 Dripping with Sabæan spice
 On thy pillow, lowly bent
 With melodious airs lovelorn,
 Breathing Light against thy face,
 While his locks a-drooping twined
 Round thy neck in subtle ring
 Make a carcanet of rays,
 And ye talk together still,
 In the language wherewith Spring
 Letters cowslips on the hill?
 Hence that look and smile of thine,
 Spiritual Adeline.

MARGARET.

I.

O SWEET pale Margaret,
 O rare pale Margaret,
 What lit your eyes with tearful power,
 Like moonlight on a falling shower?
 Who lent you, love, your mortal
 dower
 Of pensive thought and aspect
 pale,
 Your melancholy sweet and frail
 As perfume of the cuckoo-flower?
 From the westward-winding flood,
 From the evening-lighted wood,
 From all things outward you have
 won
 A tearful grace, as tho' you stood
 Between the rainbow and the sun.
 The very smile before you speak,
 That dimples your transparent
 cheek,
 Encircles all the heart, and feedeth
 The senses with a still delight
 Of dainty sorrow without sound,
 Like the tender amber round,
 Which the moon about her spread-
 eth,
 Moving thro' a fleecy night.

II.

You love, remaining peacefully,
 To hear the murmur of the strife,
 But enter not the toil of life.
 Your spirit is the calmed sea,
 Laid by the tumult of the fight.
 You are the evening star, always
 Remaining betwixt dark and
 bright:
 Lull'd echoes of laborious day
 Come to you, gleams of mellow
 light
 Float by you on the verge of night.

III.

What can it matter, Margaret,
 What songs below the waning
 stars
 The lion-heart, Plantagenet,
 Sang looking thro' his prison
 bars?

Exquisite Margaret, who can
tell
The last wild thought of Chatelet,
Just ere the falling axe did part
The burning brain from the true
heart,
Even in her sight he loved so
well ?

IV.

A fairy shield your Genius made
And gave you on your natal day.
Your sorrow, only sorrow's shade,
Keeps real sorrow far away.
You move not in such solitudes,
You are not less divine,
But more human in your moods,
Than your twin-sister, Adeline.
Your hair is darker, and your eyes
Touch'd with a somewhat darker
hue,
And less aërially blue,
But ever trembling thro' the dew
Of dainty-woeful sympathies.

V.

O sweet pale Margaret,
O rare pale Margaret,
Come down, come down, and hear me
speak :
Tie up the ringlets on your cheek :
The sun is just about to set,
The arching limes are tall and shady,
And faint, rainy lights are seen,
Moving in the leavy beech.
Rise from the feast of sorrow, lady,
Where all day long you sit
between
Joy and woe, and whisper each.
Or only look across the lawn,
Look out below your bower-eaves,
Look down, and let your blue eyes
dawn
Upon me thro' the jasmine-leaves.

ROSALIND.

I.

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
My frolic falcon, with bright eyes,

Whose free delight, from any height
of rapid flight,
Stoops at all game that wing the skies.
My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
My bright-eyed, wild-eyed falcon,
whither,
Careless both of wind and weather,
Whither fly ye, what game spy ye,
Up or down the streaming wind ?

II.

The quick lark's closest-caroll'd
strains,
The shadow rushing up the sea,
The lightning flash atween the rains,
The sunlight driving down the lea,
The leaping stream, the very wind,
That will not stay, upon his way,
To stoop the cowlsp to the plains,
Is not so clear and bold and free
As you, my falcon Rosalind.
You care not for another's pains,
Because you are the soul of joy,
Bright metal all without alloy.
Life shoots and glances thro' your
veins,
And flashes off a thousand ways,
Thro' lips and eyes in subtle rays.
Your hawk-eyes are keen and bright,
Keen with triumph, watching still
To pierce me thro' with pointed light ;
But oftentimes they flash and glitter
Like sunshine on a dancing rill,
And your words are seeming-bitter,
Sharp and few, but seeming-bitter
From excess of swift delight.

III.

Come down, come home, my Rosalind,
My gay young hawk, my Rosalind :
Too long you keep the upper skies ;
Too long you roam and wheel at will ;
But we must hood your random eyes,
That care not whom they kill,
And your cheek, whose brilliant hue
Is so sparkling-fresh to view,
Some red heath-flower in the dew,
Touch'd with sunrise. We must bind
And keep you fast, my Rosalind,
Fast, fast, my wild-eyed Rosalind,
And clip your wings, and make you
love :

When we have lured you from above,
And that delight of frolic flight, by
 day or night,
From North to South,
We'll bind you fast in silken cords,
And kiss away the bitter words
From off your rosy mouth.

ELEÄNORE.

I.

THY dark eyes open'd not,
Nor first reveal'd themselves to
 English air,
 For there is nothing here,
Which, from the outward to the
 inward brought,
Moulded thy baby thought.
Far off from human neighborhood,
 Thou wert 'born, on a summer
 morn,
A mile beneath the cedar-wood.
Thy bounteous forehead was not
 fann'd
 With breezes from our oaken
 glades,
But thou wert nursed in some delicious
 ' land
 Of lavish lights, and floating
 shades:
And flattering thy childish thought
 The oriental fairy brought,
 At the moment of thy birth,
From old well-heads of haunted rills,
And the hearts of purple hills,
 And shadow'd coves on a sunny
 shore,
 The choicest wealth of all the
 earth,
 Jewel or shell, or starry ore,
To deck thy cradle, Eleänore.

II.

Or the yellow-banded bees,
Thro' half-open lattices
Coming in the scented breeze,
 Fed thee, a child, lying alone,
 With whitest honey in fairy gar-
 dens cull'd—
A glorious child, dreaming alone,

In silk-soft folds, upon yielding
 down,
With the hum of swarming bees
Into dreamful slumber lull'd.

III.

Who may minister to thee?
Summer herself should minister
 To thee, with fruitage golden-
 rinded
 On golden salvers, or it may be,
Youngest Autumn, in a bower
Grape-thicken'd from the light, and
 blinded
 With many a deep-hued bell-like
 flower
Of fragrant trailers, when the air
 Sleepeth over all the heaven,
And the crag that fronts the
 Even,
 All along the shadowing shore,
Crimsons over an inland mere,
 Eleänore!

IV.

How may full-sail'd verse express,
 How may measured words adore
 The full-flowing harmony
Of thy swan-like stateliness,
 Eleänore?
 The luxuriant symmetry
Of thy floating gracefulness,
 Eleänore?
 Every turn and glance of thine,
 Every lineament divine,
 Eleänore,
And the steady sunset glow,
That stays upon thee? For
 in thee
Is nothing sudden, nothing sin-
 gle;
Like two streams of incense free
 From one censer in one shrine,
 Thought and motion mingle,
Mingle ever. Motions flow
To one another, even as tho'
They were modulated so
 To an unheard melody,
 Which lives about thee, and a sweep
 Of richest pauses, evermore
Drawn from each other mellow-deep;
 Who may express thee, Eleänore?



"ON SILKEN CUSHIONS HALF RECLINED."—Page 25.

V.

I stand before thee, Eleänore ;
 I see thy beauty gradually unfold,
 Daily and hourly, more and more.
 I muse, as in a trance, the while
 Slowly, as from a cloud of gold,
 Comes out thy deep ambrosial smile,
 I muse, as in a trance, whene'er
 The languors of thy love-deep
 eyes
 Float on to me. I would I were
 So tranced, so rapt in ecstasies,
 To stand apart, and to adore,
 Gazing on thee for evermore,
 Serene, imperial Eleänore !

VI.

Sometimes, with most intensity
 Gazing, I seem to see
 Thought folded over thought, smiling
 asleep,
 Slowly awaken'd, grow so full and deep
 In thy large eyes, that, overpower'd
 quite,
 I cannot veil, or droop my sight,
 But am as nothing in its light :
 As tho' a star, in inmost heaven set,
 Ev'n while we gaze on it,
 Should slowly round his orb, and
 slowly grow
 To a full face, there like a sun re-
 main
 Fix'd—then as slowly fade again,
 And draw itself to what it was
 before ;
 So full, so deep, so slow,
 Thought seems to come and go
 In thy large eyes, imperial Eleä-
 nore.

VII.

As thunder-clouds that, hung on high,
 Roof'd the world with doubt and
 fear,
 Floating thro' an evening atmosphere,
 Grow golden all about the sky ;
 In thee all passion becomes passion-
 less,
 Touch'd by thy spirit's mellowness,
 Losing his fire and active might
 In a silent meditation,

Falling into a still delight,
 And luxury of contemplation :
 As waves that up a quiet cove
 Rolling slide, and lying still
 Shadow forth the banks at
 will :
 Or sometimes they swell and move,
 Pressing up against the land,
 With motions of the outer sea :
 And the self-same influence
 Controlleth all the soul and sense
 Of Passion gazing upon thee.
 His bow-string slacken'd, languid
 Love,
 Leaning his cheek upon his hand,
 Droops both his wings, regarding
 thee,
 And so would languish evermore,
 Serene, imperial Eleänore.

VIII.

But when I see thee roam, with tresses
 unconfined,
 While the amorous, odorous wind
 Breathes low between the sunset and
 the moon ;
 Or, in a shadowy saloon,
 On silken cushions half reclined ;
 I watch thy grace ; and in its
 place
 My heart a charmed slumber
 keeps,
 While I muse upon thy face ;
 And a languid fire creeps
 Thro' my veins to all my frame,
 Dissolvingly and slowly : soon
 From thy rose-red lips MY name
 Floweth : and then, as in a swoon,
 With dinning sound my ears are
 rife,
 My tremulous tongue faltereth,
 I lose my color, I lose my breath,
 I drink the cup of a costly death,
 Brimm'd with delirious draughts of
 warmest life.
 I die with my delight, before
 I hear what I would hear from
 thee ;
 Yet tell my name again to me
 I *would* be dying evermore,
 So dying ever, Eleänore.

I.

My life is full of weary days,
 But good things have not kept aloof,
 Nor wander'd into other ways:
 I have not lack'd thy mild reproof,
 Nor golden largess of thy praise.

And now shake hands across the
 brink
 Of that deep grave to which I go:
 Shake hands once more: I cannot
 sink
 So far—far down, but I shall know
 Thy voice, and answer from below.

II.

When in the darkness over me
 The four-handed mole shall scrape,
 Plant thou no dusky cypress-tree,
 Nor wreathe thy cap with doleful
 crape,
 But pledge me in the flowing grape.

And when the sappy field and wood
 Grow green beneath the showery
 gray,
 And rugged barks begin to bud,
 And thro' damp holts new-flush'd
 with may,
 Ring sudden scritchings of the jay,

Then let wise Nature work her will,
 And on my clay her darnel grow;
 Come only, when the days are still,
 And at my headstone whisper low,
 And tell me if the woodbines blow.

EARLY SONNETS.

I.

TO ———.

As when with downcast eyes we muse
 and brood,
 And ebb into a former life, or seem
 To lapse far back in some confused
 dream
 To states of mystical similitude;
 If one but speaks or hems or stirs his
 chair,

Ever the wonder waxeth more and
 more,
 So that we say, 'All this hath been
 before,
 All this hath been, I know not when
 or where.'
 So, friend, when first I look'd upon
 your face,
 Our thought gave answer each to
 each, so true—
 Opposed mirrors each reflecting
 each—
 That tho' I knew not in what time or
 place,
 Methought that I had often met with
 you,
 And either lived in either's heart and
 speech.

TO J. M. K.

My hope and heart is with thee—thou
 wilt be
 A latter Luther, and a soldier-priest
 To scare church-harpies from the mas-
 ter's feast;
 Our dusted velvets have much need of
 thee:
 Thou art no sabbath-drawler of old
 saws,
 Distill'd from some worm-canker'd
 homily;
 But spurr'd at heart with fieriest
 energy
 To embattail and to wall about thy
 cause
 With iron-worded proof, hating to
 hark
 The humming of the drowsy pulpit-
 drone
 Half God's good sabbath, while the
 worn-out clerk
 Brow-beats his desk below. Thou
 from a throne
 Mounted in heaven wilt shoot into the
 dark
 Arrows of lightnings. I will stand
 and mark.

III.

MINE be the strength of spirit, full
 and free,



" MY LIFE IS FULL OF WEARY DAYS " — *Page 26*

Like some broad river rushing down
 alone,
 With the selfsame impulse wherewith
 he was thrown
 From his loud fount upon the echoing
 lea :—
 Which with increasing might doth
 forward flee
 By town, and tower, and hill, and
 cape, and isle,
 And in the middle of the green salt
 sea
 Keeps his blue waters fresh for many
 a mile.
 Mine be the power which ever to its
 sway
 Will win the wise at once, and by
 degrees
 May into uncongenial spirits flow;
 Ev'n as the warm gulf-stream of
 Florida
 Floats far away into the Northern seas
 The lavish growths of southern
 Mexico.

IV.

ALEXANDER.

WARRIOR of God, whose strong right
 arm debased
 The throne of Persia, when her Satrap
 bled
 At Issus by the Syrian gates, or fled
 Beyond the Memmian naphtha-pits,
 disgraced
 For ever—thee (thy pathway sand-
 erased)
 Gliding with equal crowns two ser-
 pents led
 Joyful to that palm-planted fountain-
 fed
 Ammonian Oasis in the waste.
 There in a silent shade of laurel
 brown
 Apart the Chamian Oracle divine
 Shelter'd his unapproached mysteries :
 High things were spoken there,
 unhandled down;
 Only they saw thee from the secret
 shrine
 Returning with hot cheek and kindled
 eyes.

V.

BUONAPARTE.

HE thought to quell the stubborn
 hearts of oak,
 Madman !—to chain with chains, and
 bind with bands
 That island queen who sways the
 floods and lands
 From Ind to Ind, but in fair daylight
 woke,
 When from her wooden walls,—lit by
 sure hands,—
 With thunders, and with lightnings,
 and with smoke,—
 Peal after peal, the British battle
 broke,
 Lulling the brine against the Coptic
 sands.
 We taught him lowlier moods, when
 Elsinore
 Heard the war moan along the dis-
 tant sea,
 Rocking with shatter'd spars, with
 sudden fires
 Flamed over : at Trafalgar yet once
 more
 We taught him : late he learned
 humility
 Perforce, like those whom Gideon
 school'd with briers.

VI.

POLAND.

How long, O God, shall men be rid-
 den down,
 And trampled under by the last and
 least
 Of men ? The heart of Poland hath
 not ceased
 To quiver, tho' her sacred blood doth
 drown
 The fields, and out of every smoulder-
 ing town
 Cries to Thee, lest brute Power be
 increased,
 Till that o'ergrown Barbarian in the
 East
 Transgress his ample bound to some
 new crown :—
 Cries to Thee, ' Lord, how long shall
 these things be ?

How long this icy-hearted Muscovite
Oppress the region? Us, O Just and
Good,
Forgive, who smiled when she was
torn in three;
Us, who stand now, when we should
aid the right—
A matter to be wept with tears of
blood!

VII.

CARESS'D or chidden by the slender
hand,
And singing airy trifles this or that,
Light Hope at Beauty's call would
perch and stand,
And run thro' every change of sharp
and flat;
And Fancy came and at her pillow sat,
When Sleep had bound her in his rosy
band,
And chased away the still-recurring
gnat,
And woke her with a lay from fairy
land.
But now they live with Beauty less
and less,
For Hope is other Hope and wanders
far,
Nor cares to lisp in love's delicious
creeds;
And Fancy watches in the wilderness,
Poor Fancy sadder than a single star,
That sets at twilight in a land of reeds.

VIII.

THE form, the form alone is eloquent!
A nobler yearning never broke her
rest
Than but to dance and sing, be gayly
drest,
And win all eyes with all accomplish-
ment:
Yet in the whirling dances as we went,
My fancy made me for a moment blest
To find my heart so near the beau-
teous breast
That once had power to rob it of con-
tent.
A moment came the tenderness of tears,
The phantom of a wish that once
could move,

A ghost of passion that no smiles re-
store—
For ah! the slight coquette, she can-
not love,
And if you kiss'd her feet a thousand
years,
She still would take the praise, and
care no more.

IX.

WAN Sculptor, weepst thou to take
the cast
Of those dead lineaments that near
thee lie?
O sorrowest thou, pale Painter, for the
past,
In painting some dead friend from
memory?
Weep on: beyond his object Love can
last:
His object lives: more cause to weep
have I:
My tears, no tears of love, are flowing
fast,
No tears of love, but tears that Love
can die.
I pledge her not in any cheerful cup,
Nor care to sit beside her where she
sits—
Ah pity—hint it not in human tones,
But breathe it into earth and close it
up
With secret death forever, in the pits
Which some green Christmas crams
with weary bones.

X.

IF I were loved, as I desire to be,
What is there in the great sphere of
the earth,
And range of evil between death and
birth,
That I should fear,—if I were loved
by thee?
All the inner, all the outer world of
pain
Clear Love would pierce and cleave,
if thou wert mine,
As I have heard that, somewhere in
the main,
Fresh-water springs come up through
bitter brine.



"IF I WERE LOVED, AS I DESIRE TO BE."—Page 8

'Twere joy, not fear, claspt hand-in-hand with thee,
To wait for death—mute—careless of all ills,
Apart upon a mountain, tho' the surge
Of some new deluge from a thousand hills
Flung leagues of roaring foam into the gorge
Below us, as far on as eye could see.

XI.

THE BRIDESMAID.

O BRIDESMAID, ere the happy knot
was tied,
Thine eyes so wept that they could hardly see;
Thy sister smiled and said, 'No tears for me!

A happy bridesmaid makes a happy bride.'
And then, the couple standing side by side,
Love lighted down between them full of glee,
And over his left shoulder laugh'd at thee,
'O happy bridesmaid, make a happy bride.'
And all at once a pleasant truth I learn'd,
For while the tender service made thee weep,
I loved thee for the tear thou couldst not hide,
And prest thy nand, and knew the press return'd,
And thought, 'My life is sick of single sleep:
O happy bridesmaid, make a happy bride!'

THE PRINCESS;

A MEDLEY.

PROLOGUE.

SIR Walter Vivian all a summer's day
Gave his broad lawns until the set of sun
Up to the people: thither flock'd at noon
His tenants, wife and child, and thither half
The neighboring borough with their Institute
Of which he was the patron. I was there
From college, visiting the son,—the son
A Walter too,—with others of our set,
Five others: we were seven at Vivian-place.

And me that morning Walter show'd the house,
Greek, set with busts: from vases in the hall

Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier than their names,
Grew side by side; and on the pavement lay
Carved stones of the Abbey-ruin in the park,
Huge Ammonites, and the first bones of Time;
And on the tables every clime and age
Jumbled together; celts and calumets,
Claymore and snowshoe, toys in lava, fans
Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,
Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere,
The cursed Malayan crease, and battle-clubs
From the isles of palm: and higher on the walls,
Betwixt the monstrous horns of elk and deer,
His own forefathers' arms and armor hung.

And 'this' he said 'was Hugh's at
 Agincourt;
 And that was old Sir Ralph's at As-
 calon:
 A good knight he! we keep a chronicle
 With all about him'—which he
 brought, and I
 Dived in a hoard of tales that dealt
 with knights,
 Half-legend, half-historic, counts, and
 kings
 Who laid about them at their wills
 and died;
 And mixt with these, a lady, one that
 arm'd
 Her own fair head, and sallying thro'
 the gate,
 Had beat her foes with slaughter
 from her walls.

'O miracle of women,' said the book,
 'O noble heart who, being strait-be-
 sieged
 By this wild king to force her to his
 wish,
 Nor bent, nor broke, nor shunn'd a
 soldier's death,
 But now when all was lost or seem'd
 as lost—
 Her stature more than mortal in the
 burst
 Of sunrise, her arm lifted, eyes on
 fire—
 Brake with a blast of trumpets from
 the gate,
 And, falling on them like a thunder-
 bolt,
 She trampled some beneath her
 horses' heels,
 And some were whelm'd with missiles
 of the wall,
 And some were push'd with lances
 from the rock,
 And part were drown'd within the
 whirling brook:
 O miracle of noble womanhood!'

So sang the gallant glorious
 chronicle;
 And, I all rapt in this, 'Come out,' he
 said,
 'To the Abbey: there is Aunt Eliza-
 beth

And sister Lilia with the rest.' We
 went
 (I kept the book and had my finger
 in it)
 Down thro' the park: strange was the
 sight to me;
 For all the sloping pasture murmur'd,
 sown
 With happy faces and with holiday.
 There moved the multitude, a thou-
 sand heads:
 The patient leaders of their Institute
 Taught them with facts. One rear'd
 a font of stone
 And drew, from butts of water on the
 slope,
 The fountain of the moment, playing,
 now
 A twisted snake, and now a rain of
 pearls,
 Or steep-up spout whereon the gilded
 ball
 Danced like a wisp; and somewhat
 lower down
 A man with knobs and wires and
 vials fired
 A cannon: Echo answer'd in her
 sleep
 From hollow fields: and here were
 telescopes
 For azure views; and there a group
 of girls
 In circle waited, whom the electric
 shock
 Dislink'd with shrieks and laughter:
 round the lake
 A little clock-work steamer paddling
 plied
 And shook the lilies: perch'd about
 the knolls
 A dozen angry models jetted steam:
 A petty railway ran: a fire-balloon
 Rose gem-like up before the dusky
 groves
 And dropt a fairy parachute and past:
 And there thro' twenty posts of tele-
 graph
 They flash'd a saucy message to and
 fro
 Between the mimic stations; so that
 sport
 Went hand in hand with Science;
 elsewhere



"THITHER I LOCK'D AT NOON."—Page 29.

Pure sport: a herd of boys with
clamor bowl'd
And stump'd the wicket; babies roll'd
about
Like tumbled fruit in grass; and men
and maids
Arranged a country dance, and flew
thro' light
And shadow, while the twangling
violin
Struck up with Soldier-laddie, and
overhead
The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty
lime
Made noise with bees and breeze
from end to end.

Strange was the sight and smack-
ing of the time;
And long we gazed, but satiated at
length
Came to the ruins. High-arch'd and
ivy-claspt,
Of finest Gothic lighter than a fire,
Thro' one wide chasm of time and
frost they gave
The park, the crowd, the house; but
all within
The sward was trim as any garden
lawn:
And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth,
And Lilia with the rest, and lady
friends
From neighbor seats: and there was
Ralph himself,
A broken statue propt against the
wall,
As gay as any. Lilia, wild with sport,
Half child half woman as she was, had
wound
A scarf of orange round the stony
helm,
And robed the shoulders in a rosy silk,
That made the old warrior from his
ivied nook
Glow like a sunbeam: near his tomb
a feast
Shone, silver-set; about it lay the
guests,
And there we join'd them: then the
maiden Aunt
Took this fair day for text, and from
it preach'd

An universal culture for the crowd,
And all things great; but we, un-
worthier, told
Of college: he had climb'd across the
spikes,
And he had squeezed himself betwixt
the bars,
And he had breathed the Proctor's
dogs; and one
Discuss'd his tutor, rough to common
men,
But honeying at the whisper of a lord;
And one the Master, as a rogue in
grain
Veneer'd with sanctimonious theory.

But while they talk'd, above their
heads I saw
The feudal warrior lady-clad; which
brought
My book to mind: and opening this I
read
Of old Sir Ralph a page or two that
rang
With tilt and tourney; then the tale
of her
That drove her foes with slaughter
from her walls,
And much I praised her nobleness,
and 'Where,'
Ask'd Walter, patting Lilia's head
(she lay
Beside him) 'lives there such a woman
now?'

Quick answer'd Lilia 'There are
thousands now
Such women, but convention beats
them down:
It is but bringing up; no more than
that:
You men have done it: how I hate
you all!
Ah, were I something great! I wish I
were
Some mighty poetess, I would shame
you then,
That love to keep us children! O I
wish
That I were some great princess, I
would build
Far off from men a college like a
man's,

And I would teach them all that men
are taught;
We are twice as quick!' And here
she shook aside
The hand that play'd the patron with
her curls.

And one said smiling 'Pretty were
the sight
If our old halls could change their sex,
and flaunt
With prudes for proctors, dowagers
for deans,
And sweet girl-graduates in their
golden hair.
I think they should not wear our rusty
gowns
But move as rich as Emperor-moths,
or Ralph
Who shines so in the corner; yet I fear
If there were many Lilies in the brood,
However deep you might embower the
nest,
Some boy would spy it.'

At this upon the sward
She tapt her tiny silken-sandal'd foot:
'That's your light way; but I would
make it death
For any male thing but to peep at us.'

Petulant she spoke, and at herself
she laugh'd;
A rosebud set with little wilful thorns,
And sweet as English air could make
her, she:
But Walter hail'd a score of names
upon her,
And 'petty Ogress,' and 'ungrateful
Puss,'
And swore he long'd at college, only
long'd,
All else was well, for she-society.
They boated and they cricketed; they
talk'd
At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics;
They lost their weeks; they vex'd the
souls of deans;
They rode; they betted; made a hun-
dred friends,
And caught the blossom of the flying
terms,
But miss'd the mignonette of Vivian-
place,

The little hearth-flower, Lilia. Thus
he spoke,
Part banter, part affection.
'True,' she said,
'We doubt not that. O yes, you
miss'd us much.
I'll stake my ruby ring upon it you
did.'

She held it out: and as a parrot
turns
Up thro' gilt wires a crafty loving eye,
And takes a lady's finger with all care,
And bites it for true heart and not for
harm,
So he with Lilia's. Daintily she
shriek'd
And wrung it. 'Doubt my word
again!' he said.
'Come, listen! here is proof that you
were miss'd:
We seven stay'd at Christmas up to
read;
And there we took one tutor as to
read:
The hard-grained Muses of the cube
and square
Were out of season: never man, I
think,
So moulder'd in a sinecure as he:
For while our cloisters echo'd frosty
feet,
And our long walks were stript as
bare as brooms,
We did but talk you over, pledge you
all
In wassail; often, like as many girls—
Sick for the hollies and the yews of
home—
As many little trifling Lilies—play'd
Charades and riddles as at Christmas
here,
And *what's my thought* and *when* and
where and *how*,
And often told a tale from mouth to
mouth
As here at Christmas.'

She remember'd that:
A pleasant game, she thought: she
liked it more
Than magic music, forfeits, all the rest.
But these—what kind of tales did men
tell men,

She wonder'd, by themselves?

A half-disdain
Perch'd on the pouted blossom of her
lips:

And Walter nodded at me; 'He began,
The rest would follow, each in turn;
and so

We forged a sevenfold story. Kind?
what kind?

Chimeras, crotchets, Christmas sole-
cisms,

Seven-headed monsters only made to
kill

Time by the fire in winter.'

'Kill him now,
The tyrant! kill him in the summer
too,'

Said Lilia; 'Why not now?' the
maiden Aunt.

'Why not a summer's as a winter's
tale?

A tale for summer as befits the time,
And something it should be to suit
the place,

Heroic, for a hero lies beneath,
Grave, solemn!'

Walter warp'd his mouth at this
To something so mock-solemn, that I
laugh'd

And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling
mirth

An echo like a ghostly woodpecker,
Hid in the ruins; till the maiden
Aunt

(A little sense of wrong had touch'd
her face

With color) turn'd to me with 'As
you will;

Heroic if you will, or what you will,
Or be yourself your hero if you will.'

'Take Lilia, then, for heroine'
clamor'd he,

'And make her some great Princess,
six feet high,

Grand, epic, homicidal; and be you
The Prince to win her!'

'Then follow me, the Prince,'
I answer'd, 'each be hero in his turn!
Seven and yet one, like shadows in a
dream.—

Heroic seems our Princess as
required—

But something made to suit with Time
and place,

And Gothic ruin and a Grecian house,
A talk of college and of ladies' rights,
A feudal knight in silken masquerade,
And, yonder, shrieks and strange
experiments

For which the good Sir Ralph had
burnt them all—

This *were* a medley! we should have
him back

Who told the "Winter's tale" to do
it for us.

No matter: we will say whatever
comes.

And let the ladies sing us, if they will,
From time to time, some ballad or a
song

To give us breathing-space.'

So I began,
And the rest follow'd: and the women
sang

Between the rougher voices of the
men,

Like linnets in the pauses of the wind:
And here I give the story and the
songs.

I.

A prince I was, blue-eyed, and fair in
face,

Of temper amorous, as the first of
May,

With lengths of yellow ringlet, like a
girl,

For on my cradle shone the Northern
star.

There lived an ancient legend in
our house.

Some sorcerer, whom a far-off grand-
sire burnt

Because he cast no shadow, had fore-
told,

Dying, that none of all our blood
should know

The shadow from the substance, and
that one

Should come to fight with shadows
and to fall.

For so, my mother said, the story ran
And, truly, waking dreams were, more
or less,

An old and strange affection of the house.
 Myself too had weird seizures, Heaven knows what:
 On a sudden in the midst of men and day,
 And while I walk'd and talk'd as heretofore,
 I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts,
 And feel myself the shadow of a dream.
 Our great court-Galen poised his gilt-head cane,
 And paw'd his beard, and mutter'd 'catalepsy.'
 My mother pitying made a thousand prayers;
 My mother was as mild as any saint,
 Half-canonized by all that look'd on her,
 So gracious was her tact and tenderness:
 But my good father thought a king a king;
 He cared not for the affection of the house;
 He held his sceptre like a pedant's wand
 To lash offence, and with long arms and hands
 Reach'd out, and pick'd offenders from the mass
 For judgment.

Now it chanced that I had been,
 When life was yet in bud and blade, betroth'd
 To one, a neighboring Princess: she to me
 Was proxy-wedded with a bootless calf
 At eight years old; and still from time to time
 Came murmurs of her beauty from the South,
 And of her brethren, youths of puissance;
 And still I wore her picture by my heart,
 And one dark tress; and all around them both
 Sweet thoughts would swarm as bees about their queen.

But when the days drew nigh that I should wed,
 My father sent ambassadors with furs
 And jewels, gifts, to fetch her: these brought back
 A present, a great labor of the loom;
 And therewithal an answer vague as wind:
 Besides, they saw the king; he took the gifts;
 He said there was a compact; that was true:
 But then she had a will; was he to blame?
 And maiden fancies; loved to live alone
 Among her women; certain, would not wed.

That morning in the presence room I stood
 With Cyril and with Florian, my two friends:
 The first a gentleman of broken means
 (His father's fault) but given to starts and bursts
 Of revel; and the last, my other heart,
 And almost my half-self, for still we moved
 Together, twinn'd as horse's ear and eye.

Now, while they spake, I saw my father's face
 Grow long and troubled like a rising moon,
 Inflamed with wrath: he started on his feet,
 Tore the king's letter, snow'd it down, and rent
 The wonder of the loom thro' warp and woof
 From skirt to skirt; and at the last he swore
 That he would send a hundred thousand men,
 And bring her in a whirlwind: then he chew'd
 The thrice-turn'd cud of wrath, and cook'd his spleen,
 Communing with his captains of the war.

At last I spoke: 'My father, let me go.
It cannot be but some gross error lies
In this report, this answer of a king,
Whom all men rate as kind and hospitable:

Or, maybe, I myself, my bride once
seen,

Whate'er my grief to find her less
than fame,

May rue the bargain made.' And
Florian said:

'I have a sister at the foreign court,
Who moves about the Princess; she,
you know,

Who wedded with a nobleman from
thence:

He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,
The lady of three castles in that land:
Thro' her this matter might be sifted
clean.'

And Cyril whisper'd: 'Take me with
you too.'

Than laughing 'what, if these weird
seizures come

Upon you in those lands, and no one
near

To point you out the shadow from the
truth!

Take me: I'll serve you better in a
strait;

I grate on rusty hinges here:' but
'No!'

Roar'd the rough king, 'you shall not;
we ourself

Will crush her pretty maiden fancies
dead

In iron gauntlets: break the council
up.'

But when the council broke, I rose
and past

Thro' the wild woods that hung about
the town;

Found a still place, and pluck'd her
likeness out;

Laid it on flowers, and watch'd it ly-
ing bathed

In the green gleam of dewy-tassell'd
trees:

What were those fancies? wherefore
break her troth?

Proud look'd the lips: but while I
meditated

A wind arose and rush'd upon the
South,

And shook the songs, the whispers,
and the shrieks

Of the wild woods together; and a
Voice

Went with it, 'Follow, follow, thou
shalt win.'

Then, ere the silver sickle of that
month

Became her golden shield, I stole from
court

With Cyril and with Florian, unper-
ceived,

Cat-footed thro' the town and half in
dread

To hear my father's clamor at our backs
With Ho! from some bay-window
shake the night;

But all was quiet: from the bastion'd
walls

Like threaded spiders, one by one, we
dropt,

And flying reach'd the frontier: then
we crost

To a livelier land; and so by tilth and
grange,

And vines, and blowing bosks of
wilderness,

We gain'd the mother-city thick with
towers,

And in the imperial palace found the
king.

His name was Gama; crack'd and
small his voice,

But bland the smile that like a wrin-
king wind

On glassy water drove his cheek in
lines;

A little dry old man, without a star,
Not like a king: three days he feasted
us,

And on the fourth I spake of why we
came,

And my betroth'd. 'You do us,
Prince,' he said,

Airing a snowy hand and signet gem,
'All honor. We remember love our-
selves

In our sweet youth: there did a com-
pact pass

Long summers back, a kind of ceremony—
 I think the year in which our olives fail'd.
 I would you had her, Prince, with all my heart,
 With my full heart : but there were widows here,
 Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady Blanche ;
 They fed her theories, in and out of place
 Maintaining that with equal husbandry
 The woman were an equal to the man.
 They harp'd on this ; with this our banquets rang ;
 Our dances broke and buzz'd in knots of talk ;
 Nothing but this ; my very ears were hot
 To hear them : knowledge, so my daughter held,
 Was all in all : they had but been, she thought,
 As children ; they must lose the child, assume
 The woman : then, Sir, awful odes she wrote,
 Too awful, sure, for what they treated of,
 But all she is and does is awful ; odes About this losing of the child ; and rhymes
 And dismal lyrics, prophesying change
 Beyond all reason : these the women sang ;
 And they that know such things—I sought but peace ;
 No critic I—would call them master-pieces :
 They master'd *me*. At last she begg'd a boon,
 A certain summer-palace which I have
 Hard by your father's frontier : I said no,
 Yet being an easy man, gave it : and there,
 All wild to found an University
 For maidens, on the spur she fled ; and more
 We know not,—only this : they see no men,

Not ev'n her brother Arac, nor the twins
 Her brethren, tho' they love her, look upon her
 As on a kind of paragon ; and I (Pardon me saying it) were much loth to breed
 Dispute betwixt myself and mine : but since
 (And I confess with right) you think me bound
 In some sort, I can give you letters to her ;
 And yet, to speak the truth, I rate your chance
 Almost at naked nothing.' Thus the king ;
 And I, tho' nettled that he seem'd to slur
 With garrulous ease and oily courtesies
 Our formal compact, yet, not less (all frets
 But chafing me on fire to find my bride)
 Went forth again with both my friends. We rode
 Many a long league back to the North. At last
 From hills, that look'd across a land of hope,
 We dropt with evening on a rustic town
 Set in a gleaming river's crescent-curve,
 Close at the boundary of the liberties ;
 There, enter'd an old hostel, call'd mine host
 To council, plied him with his richest wines,
 And show'd the late-writ letters of the king
 He with a long low sibilation, stared
 As blank as death in marble ; then exclaim'd
 Averting it was clear against all rules
 For any man to go : but as his brain
 Began to mellow, ' If the king,' he said,
 ' Had given us letters, was he bound to speak ?

The king would bear him out ; and at
the last—
The summer of the vine in all his
veins—
'No doubt that we might make it
worth his while.
She once had past that way ; he heard
her speak ;
She scared him ; life ! he never saw
the like ;
She look'd as grand as doomsday and
as grave :
And he, he revered his liege-lady
there ;
He always made a point to post with
mares ;
His daughter and his housemaid were
the boys :
The land, he understood, for miles
about
Was till'd by women ; all the swine
were sows,
And all the dogs'—

But while he jested thus,
A thought flash'd thro' me which I
clothed in act,
Remembering how we three presented
Maid
Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high tide
of feast,
In masque or pageant at my father's
court.
We sent mine host to purchase female
gear ;
He brought it, and himself, a sight to
shake
The midriff of despair with laughter,
help
To lace us up, till, each, in maiden
plumes
We rustled : him we gave a costly
bribe
To guerdon silence, mounted our good
steeds,
And boldly ventured on the liberties.

We follow'd up the river as we rode.
And rode till midnight when the
college lights
Began to glitter firefly-like in copse
And linden alley : then we past an arch,
Whereon a woman-statue rose with
wings

From four wing'd horses dark against
the stars ;
And some inscription ran along the
front,
But deep in shadow : further on we
gain'd
A little street half garden and half
house ;
But scarce could hear each other speak
for noise
Of clocks and chimes, like silver
hammers falling
On silver anvils, and the splash and
stir
Of fountains spouted up and shower-
ing down
In meshes of the jasmine and the rose :
And all about us peal'd the nightin-
gale,
Rapt in her song, and careless of the
snare.

There stood a bust of Pallas for a
sign,
By two sphere lamps blazon'd like
Heaven and Earth
With constellation and with continent,
Above an entry : riding in, we call'd ;
A plump-arm'd Ostleress and a stable
wench
Came running at the call, and help'd
us down.
Then stopt a buxom hostess forth, and
sail'd,
Full-blown, before us into rooms
which gave
Upon a pillar'd porch, the bases lost
In laurel : her we ask'd of that and
this,
And who were tutors. ' Lady Blanche'
she said,
' And Lady Psyche.' ' Which was
prettiest,
Best-natured ? ' ' Lady Psyche.' ' Hers
are we,'
One voice, we cried ; and I sat down
and wrote,
In such a hand as when a field of corn
Bows all its ears before the roaring
East ;
' Three ladies of the Northern empire
pray

Your Highness would unroll them with
 your own,
 As Lady Psyche's pupils.' This I seal'd:
 The seal was Cupid bent above a
 scroll,
 And o'er his head Uranian Venus
 hung,
 And raised the blinding bandage from
 his eyes:
 I gave the letter to be sent with dawn;
 And then to bed, where half in doze I
 seem'd
 To float about a glimmering night,
 and watch
 A full sea glazed with muffled moon-
 light, swell
 On some dark shore just seen that it
 was rich.

II.

As thro' the land at eve we went,
 And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,
 We fell out, my wife and I,
 O we fell out I know not why,
 And kiss'd again with tears.
 And blessings on the falling out
 That all the more endears,
 When we fall out with those we love
 And kiss again with tears!
 For when we came where lies the child
 We lost in other years,
 There above the little grave,
 O there above the little grave,
 We kiss'd again with tears.

At break of day the College Portress
 came:
 She brought us Academic silks, in hue
 The lilac, with a silken hood to each,
 And zoned with gold; and now when
 these were on,
 And we as rich as moths from dust
 cocoons,
 She, curtseying her obeisance, let us
 know
 The Princess Ida waited: out we
 paced,
 I first, and following thro' the porch
 that sang
 All round with laurel, issued in a
 court

Compact of lucid marbles, boss'd with
 lengths
 Of classic frieze, with ample awnings
 gay
 Betwixt the pillars, and with great
 urns of flowers.
 The Muses and the Graces, group'd
 in threes,
 Enring'd a billowing fountain in the
 midst;
 And here and there on lattice edges lay
 Or book or lute; but hastily we past,
 And up a flight of stairs into the hall.

There at a board by tome and paper
 sat,
 With two tame leopards couch'd
 beside her throne
 All beauty compass'd in a female form,
 The Princess; liker to the inhabitant
 Of some clear planet close upon the
 Sun,
 Than our man's earth; such eyes were
 in her head,
 And so much grace and power, breath-
 ing down
 From over her arch'd brows, with
 every turn
 Lived thro' her to the tips of her long
 hands,
 And to her feet. She rose her height,
 and said:

'We give you welcome: not without
 redound
 Of use and glory to yourselves ye
 come,
 The first fruits of the stranger: after-
 time,
 And that full voice which circles
 round the grave,
 Will rank you nobly, mingled up with
 me.
 What! are the ladies of your land so
 tall?'
 'We of the court' said Cyril. 'From
 the court'
 She answer'd, 'then ye know the
 Prince?' and he:
 'The climax of his age! as tho' there
 were
 One rose in all the world, your High-
 ness that,



"WITH TWO TAME LEOPARDS CROUCH'D BESIDE HER THRONE"—Page 3

He worships your ideal : ' she replied :
' We scarcely thought in our own hall
to hear

This barren verbiage, current among
men,

Light coin, the tinsel clink of compli-
ment.

Your flight from out your bookless
wilds would seem

As arguing love of knowledge and of
power ;

Your language proves you still the
child. Indeed,

We dream not of him : when we set
our hand

To this great work, we purposed with
ourselves

Never to wed. You likewise will do
well,

Ladies, in entering here, to cast and
fling

The tricks, which make us toys of
men, that so,

Some future time, if so indeed you will,
You may with those self-styled our

lords ally

Your fortunes, justlier balanced, scale
with scale.'

At those high words, we conscious
of ourselves,

Perused the matting ; then an officer
Rose up, and read the statues, such as
these :

Not for three years to correspond with
home ;

Not for three years to cross the liber-
ties ;

Not for three years to speak with any
men ;

And many more, which hastily sub-
scribed,

We enter'd on the boards : and ' Now,'
she cried,

' Ye are green wood, see ye warp not.
Look, our hall !

Our statues !—not of those that men
desire,

Sleek Odalisques, or oracles of mode,
Nor stunted squaws of West or East ;

but she
That taught the Sabine how to rule,
and she

The foundress of the Babylonian wall,
The Carian Artemisia strong in war,
The Rhodope, that built the pyramid,
Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene
That fought Aurelian, and the Roman
brows

Of Agrippina. Dwell with these, and
lose

Convention, since to look on noble
forms

Makes noble thro' the sensuous
organism

That which is higher. O lift your
natures up :

Embrace our aims : work out your
freedom. Girls,

Knowledge is now no more a fountain
seal'd :

Drink deep, until the habits of the
slave,

The sins of emptiness, gossip and
spite

And slander, die. Better not be at all
Than not be noble. Leave us :

you may go :

To-day the Lady Psyche will harangue
The fresh arrivals of the week before ;

For they press in from all the prov-
inces,

And fill the hive.'

She spoke, and bowing waved
Dismissal : back again we crost the
court

To Lady Psyche's : as we enter'd in,
There sat along the forms, like morn-
ing doves

That sun their milky bosoms on the
thatch,

A patient range of pupils ; she herself
Erect behind a desk of satin-wood

A quick brunette, well-moulded, falcon
eyed,

And on the hither side, or so she
look'd,

Of twenty summers. At her left, a
child,

In shining draperies, headed like a
star,

Her maiden babe, a double April old,
Aglaiā slept. We sat : the Lady

glanced :

Then Florian, but no livelier than the
dame

That whisper'd 'Asses' ears,' among
the sedge,
'My sister,' 'Comely, too, by all that's
fair,'
Said Cyril. 'O hush, hush!' and she
began.

'This world was once a fluid haze
of light.
Till toward the centre set the starry
tides,
And eddied into suns, that wheeling
cast
The planets: then the monster, then
the man;
Tattoo'd or woaded, winter-clad in
skins,
Raw from the prime, and crushing
down his mate;
As yet we find in barbarous isles, and
here
Among the lowest.'

Thereupon she took
A bird's-eye-view of all the ungracious
past;
Glanced at the legendary Amazon
As emblematic of a nobler age;
Appraised the Lycian custom, spoke
of those
That lay at wine with Lar and
Lucumo;
Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Ro-
man lines
Of empire, and the woman's state in
each,
How far from just; till warming with
her theme
She fulminated her scorn of laws
Salique
And little-footed China, touch'd on
Mahomet
With much contempt, and came to
chivalry:
When some respect, however slight,
was paid
To woman, superstition all awry:
However then commenced the dawn:
a beam
Had slanted forward, falling in a land
Of promise; fruit would follow.
Deep, indeed,
Their debt of thanks to her who first
had dared

To leap the rotten pales of prejudice,
Disyoke their necks from custom, and
assert
None lordlier than themselves but that
which made
Woman and man. She had founded;
they must build.
Here might they learn whatever men
were taught:
Let them not fear: some said their
heads were less:
Some men's were small; not they the
least of men;
For often fineness compensated size:
Besides the brain was like the hand,
and grew
With using; thence the man's, if more
was more;
He took advantage of his strength to
be
First in the field: some ages had been
lost;
But woman ripen'd earlier, and her
life
Was longer; and albeit their glorious
names
Were fewer, scatter'd stars, yet since
in truth
The highest is the measure of the
man,
And not the Kafir, Hottentot, Malay,
Nor those horn-handed breakers of
the glebe,
But Homer, Plato, Verulam; even so
With woman: and in arts of govern-
ment
Elizabeth and others; arts of war
The peasant Joan and others; arts of
grace
Sappho and others vied with any man:
And, last not least, she who had left
her place,
And bow'd her state to them, that they
might grow
To use and power on this Oasis, lapt
In the arms of leisure, sacred from the
blight
Of ancient influence and scorn.
At last
She rose upon a wind of prophecy
Dilating on the future; 'everywhere
Two heads in council, two beside the
hearth,

Two in the tangled business of the
world,
Two in the liberal offices of life,
Two plummets dropt for one to sound
the abyss
Of science, and the secrets of the
mind:
Musician, painter, sculptor, critic,
more:
And everywhere the broad and boun-
teous Earth
Should bear a double growth of those
rare souls,
Poets, whose thoughts enrich the
blood of the world.'

She ended here, and beckon'd us:
the rest
Parted; and, glowing full-faced wel-
come, she
Began to address us, and was moving
on
In gratulation, till as when a boat
Tacks, and the slacken'd sail flaps, all
her voice
Faltering and fluttering in her throat,
she cried
'My brother!' 'Well, my sister.' 'O,'
she said,
'What do you here? and in this dress?
and these?
Why who are these? a wolf within the
fold!
A pack of wolves! the Lord be gra-
cious to me!
A plot, a plot, a plot, to ruin all!'
'No plot, no plot,' he answer'd.
'Wretched boy,
How saw you not the inscription on
the gate,
LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN
OF DEATH?'
'And if I had,' he answer'd, 'who
could think
The softer Adams of your Academe
O sister, Sirens tho' they be, were
such
As chanted on the blanching bones of
men?'
'But you will find it otherwise,' she
said.
'You jest: ill jesting with edge-tools!
my vow

Binds me to speak, and O that iron will
That axelike edge unturnable, our
Head,
The Princess.' 'Well then, Psyche,
take my life,
And nail me like a weasel on a grange
For warning: bury me beside the
gate,
And cut this epitaph above my bones:
*Here lies a brother by a sister slain,
All for the common good of woman-
kind.'*
'Let me die too,' said Cyril, 'having
seen
And heard the Lady Psyche.'

I struck in:
'Albeit so mask'd, Madam, I love the
truth;
Receive it; and in me behold the
Prince
Your countryman, affianced yéars ago
To the Lady Ida: here, for here she
was,
And thus (what other way was left) I
came.'
'O Sir, O Prince, I have no country;
none;
If any, this; but none. Whate'er I
was
Disrooted, what I am is grafted here.
Affianced, Sir? love-whispers may
not breathe
Within this vestal limit, and how
should I,
Who am not mine, say, live: the
thunder-bolt
Hangs silent; but prepare: I speak;
it falls.'
'Yet pause,' I said: 'for that inscrip-
tion there,
I think no more of deadly lurks there-
in,
Than in a clapper clapping in a garth,
To scare the fowl from fruit: if more
there be,
If more and acted on, what follows?
war;
Your own work marr'd: for this your
Academe,
Whichever side be Victor, in the
halloo
Will topple to the trumpet down, and
pass

With all fair theories only made to
 gild
 A stormless summer.' 'Let the
 Princess judge
 Of that,' she said: 'farewell, Sir—and
 to you.
 I shudder at the sequel, but I go.'

'Are you that Lady Psyche,' I re-
 join'd,
 'The fifth in line from that old
 Florian,
 Yet hangs his portrait in my father's
 hall
 (The gaunt old Baron with his beetle
 brow
 Sun-shaded in the heat of dusty fights)
 As he bestrode my Grandsire, when he
 fell
 And all else fled? we point to it, and
 we say,
 The loyal warmth of Florian is not
 cold,
 But branches current yet in kindred
 veins.'
 'Are you that Psyche,' Florian added;
 'she
 With whom I sang about the morning
 hills,
 Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the
 purple fly,
 And snared the squirrel of the glen?
 are you
 That Psyche, wont to bind my throbb-
 ing brow,
 To smoothe my pillow, mix the foam-
 ing draught
 Of fever, tell me pleasant tales, and
 read
 My sickness down to happy dreams?
 are you
 That brother-sister Psyche, both in
 one?
 You were that Psyche, but what are
 you now?'
 'You are that Psyche,' Cyril said,
 'for whom
 I would be that for ever which I
 seem,
 Woman, if I might sit beside your
 feet,
 And glean your scatter'd sapience.'
 Then once more,

'Are you that Lady Pysche,' I be-
 gan,
 'That on her bridal morn before she
 past
 From all her old companions, when
 the king
 Kiss'd her pale cheek, declared that
 ancient ties
 Would still be dear beyond the south-
 ern hills;
 That were there any of our people
 there
 In want or peril, there was one to
 hear
 And help them? look! for such are
 these and I.'
 'Are you that Psyche,' Florian ask'd,
 'to whom,
 In gentler days, your arrow-wounded
 fawn
 Came flying while you sat beside the
 well?
 The creature laid his muzzle on your
 lap,
 And sobb'd, and you sobb'd with it,
 and the blood
 Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and you
 wept.
 That was fawn's blood, not brother's,
 yet you wept.
 O by the bright head of my little
 niece,
 You were that Psyche, and what are
 you now?'
 'You are that Psyche,' Cyril said
 again,
 'The mother of the sweetest little
 maid,
 That ever crow'd for kisses.'
 'Out upon it!'
 She answer'd, 'peace! and why should
 I not play
 The Spartan Mother with emotion,
 be
 The Lucius Junius Brutus of my
 kind?
 Him you call great: he for the com-
 mon weal,
 The fading politics of mortal Rome,
 As I might slay this child if good
 need were,
 Slew both his sons: and I, shall I, on
 whom

The secular emancipation turns
Of half this world, be swerved from
right to save
A prince, a brother? a little will I
yield.
Best so, perchance, for us, and well
for you.
O hard, when love and duty clash! I
fear
My conscience will not count me
fleckless; yet—
Hear my conditions: promise (other-
wise
You perish) as you came, to slip away
To-day, to-morrow, soon: it shall be
said,
These women were too barbarous,
would not learn;
They fled, who might have shamed
us: promise, all.'

What could we else, we promised
each; and she,
Like some wild creature newly-caged,
commenced
A to-and-fro, so pacing till she paused
By Florian; holding out her lily arms
Took both his hands, and smiling
faintly, said:
'I knew you at the first: tho' you
have grown
You scarce have alter'd: I am sad
and glad
To see you, Florian. I give thee to
death
My brother! it was duty spoke, not I.
My needful seeming harshness, par-
don it.
Our mother, is she well?'
With that she kiss'd
His forehead, then, a moment after,
clung
About him, and betwixt them blos-
som'd up
From out a common vein of memory
Sweet household talk, and phrases of
the hearth,
And far allusion, till the gracious
dews
Began to glisten and to fall: and
while
They stood, so rapt, we gazing, came
a voice,

'I brought a message here from Lady
Blanche.
Back started she, and turning round
we saw
The Lady Blanche's daughter where
she stood,
Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,
A rosy blonde, and in a college gown,
That clad her like an April daffodilly
(Her mother's color) with her lips
apart,
And all her thoughts as fair within
her eyes,
As bottom agates seen to wave and
float
In crystal currents of clear morning
seas.

So stood that same fair creature at
the door.
Then Lady Psyche, 'Ah—Melissa—
you!
You heard us?' and Melissa, 'O par-
don me
I heard, I could not help it, did not
wish:
But, dearest Lady, pray you fear me
not,
Nor think I bear that heart within my
breast,
To give three gallant gentlemen to
death.'
'I trust you,' said the other, 'for we
two
Were always friends, none closer,
elm and vine:
But yet your mother's jealous temper-
ament—
Let not your prudence, dearest,
drowse, or prove
The Danaïd of a leaky vase, for fear
This whole foundation ruin, and I
lose
My honor, these their lives.' 'Ah,
fear me not,'
Replied Melissa; 'no—I would not
tell,
No, not for all Aspasia's cleverness,
No, not to answer, Madam, all those
hard things
That Sheba came to ask of Solomon.'
'Be it so,' the other, 'that we still
may lead

The new light up, and culminate in
 peace,
 For Solomon may come to Sheba
 yet.'
 Said Cyril, 'Madam, he the wisest
 man
 Feasted the woman wisest then, in
 halls
 Of Lebanonian cedar: nor should you
 (Tho' Madam *you* should answer, *we*
 would ask)
 Less welcome find among us, if you
 came
 Among us, debtors for our lives to
 you,
 Myself for something more.' He
 said not what,
 But 'Thanks,' she answer'd 'Go:
 we have been too long
 Together: keep your hoods about
 the face;
 They do so that affect abstraction
 here.
 Speak little; mix not with the rest;
 and hold
 Your promise: all, I trust, may yet
 be well.'

We turn'd to go, but Cyril took the
 child,
 And held her round the knees against
 his waist,
 And blew the swoll'n check of a
 trumpeter,
 While Psyche watch'd them, smiling,
 and the child
 Push'd her flat hand against his face
 and laugh'd;
 And thus our conference closed.
 And then we stroll'd
 For half the day thro' stately thea-
 tres
 Bench'd crescent wise. In each we
 sat, we heard
 The grave Professor. On the lecture
 slate
 The circle rounded under female hands
 With flawless demonstration: fol-
 low'd then
 A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,
 With scraps of thundrous Epic lilted
 out
 By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies

And quoted odes, and jewels five-
 words-long
 That on the stretch'd forefinger of all
 Time
 Sparkle for ever: then we dipt in all
 That treats of whatsoever is, the state,
 The total chronicles of man, the
 mind,
 The morals, something of the frame,
 the rock,
 The star, the bird, the fish, the shell,
 the flower,
 Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest,
 And whatsoever can be taught and
 known;
 Till like three horses that have broken
 fence,
 And glutted all night long breast-deep
 in corn,
 We issued gorged with knowledge,
 and I spoke:
 'Why, Sirs, they do all this as well as
 we.'
 'They hunt old trails' said Cyril
 'very well;
 But when did woman ever yet invent?'
 'Ungracious!' answer'd Florian;
 'have you learnt
 No more from Psyche's lecture, you
 that talk'd
 The trash that made me sick, and al-
 most sad?'
 'O trash' he said, 'but with a kernel
 in it.
 Should I not call her wise, who made
 me wise?
 And learnt? I learnt more from her
 in a flash,
 Than if my brainpan were an empty
 hull,
 And every Muse tumbled a science in.
 A thousand hearts lie fallow in these
 halls,
 And round these halls a thousand
 baby loves
 Fly twanging headless arrows at the
 hearts,
 Whence follows many a vacant pang;
 but O
 With me, Sir, enter'd in the bigger
 boy,
 The Head of all the golden-shafted
 firm,

The long-limb'd lad that had a Psyche
too;
He cleft me thro' the stomacher; and
now
What think you of it, Florian? do I
chase
The substance or the shadow? will it
hold?
I have no sorcerer's malison on me,
No ghostly hauntings like his High-
ness. I
Flatter myself that always everywhere
I know the substance when I see it.
Well,
Are castles shadows? Three of
them? Is she
The sweet proprietress a shadow?
If not,
Shall those three castles patch my
tatter'd coat?
For dear are those three castles to
my wants,
And dear is sister Psyche to my heart,
And two dear things are one of double
worth,
And much I might have said, but
that my zone
Unmann'd me: then the Doctors! O
to hear
The Doctors! O to watch the thirsty
plants
Imbibing! once or twice I thought to
roar,
To break my chain, to shake my
mane: but thou,
Modulate me, Soul of mincing mimic-
ry!
Make liquid treble of that bassoon,
my throat;
Abase those eyes that ever loved to
meet
Star-sisters answering under crescent
brows;
Abate the stride, which speaks of
man, and loose
A flying charm of blushes o'er this
cheek,
Where they like swallows coming out
of time
Will wonder why they came: but
hark the bell
For dinner, let us go!'
And in we stream'd

Among the columns, pacing staid and
still
By twos and threes, till all from end
to end
With beauties every shade of brown
and fair
In colors gayer than the morning
mist,
The long hall glitter'd like a bed of
flowers.
How might a man not wander from
his wits
Pierced thro' with eyes, but that I
kept mine own
Intent on her, who wrapt in glorious
dreams,
The second sight of some Astræan
age,
Sat compass'd with professors: they,
the while,
Discuss'd a doubt and tost it to and
fro:
A clamor thicken'd, mixt with inmost
terms
Of art and science: Lady Blanche
alone
Of faded form and haughtiest linea-
ments,
With all her autumn tresses falsely
brown,
Shot sidelong daggers at us, a tiger-
cat
In act to spring.
At last a solemn grace
Concluded, and we sought the gar-
dens: there
One walk'd reciting by herself, and
one
In this hand held a volume as to read,
And smoothed a petted peacock down
with that:
Some to a low song oar'd a shallop by,
Or under arches of the marble bridge
Hung, shadow'd from the heat: some
hid and sought
In the orange thickets: others tost a
ball
Above the fountain-jets, and back
again
With laughter: others lay about the
lawns,
Of the older sort, and murmur'd that
their May

Was passing : what was learning unto
 them?
 They wish'd to marry; they could
 rule a house;
 Men hated learned women: but we
 three
 Sat muffled like the Fates; and often
 came
 Melissa hitting all we saw with shafts
 Of gentile satire, kin to charity,
 That harm'd not: then day droopt;
 the chapel bells
 Call'd us: we left the walks; we mixt
 with those
 Six hundred maidens clad in purest
 white,
 Before two streams of light from wall
 to wall,
 While the great organ almost burst
 his pipes,
 Groaning for power, and rolling thro'
 the court
 A long melodious thunder to the
 sound
 Of solemn psalms, and silver litanies,
 The work of Ida, to call down from
 Heaven
 A blessing on her labors for the world.

III.

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
 Wind of the western sea,
 Low, low, breathe and blow,
 Wind of the western sea!
 Over the rolling waters go,
 Come from the dying moon, and blow,
 Blow him again to me;
 While my little one, while my pretty one,
 sleeps,
 Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
 Father will come to thee soon;
 Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
 Father will come to thee soon,
 Father will come to his babe in the nest,
 Silver sails all out of the west,
 Under the silver moon:
 Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one,
 sleep.

Morn in the white wake of the morn-
 ing star

Came furrowing all the orient into
 gold.
 We rose, and each by other drest with
 care
 Descended to the court that lay three
 parts
 In shadow, but the Muses' heads were
 touch'd
 Above the darkness from their native
 East.

There while we stood beside the
 fount, and watch'd
 Or seem'd to watch the dancing bub-
 ble, approach'd
 Melissa, tinged with wan from lack of
 sleep,
 Or grief, and glowing round her dewy
 eyes
 The circled Iris of a night of tears;
 'And fly,' she cried, 'O fly, while yet
 you may!
 My mother knows: ' and when I ask'd
 her 'how,'
 'My fault!' she wept 'my fault! and
 yet not mine;
 Yet mine in part. O hear me, pardon
 me.
 My mother, 'tis her wont from night
 to night
 To rail at Lady Psyche and her side.
 She says the Princess should have
 been the Head,
 Herself and Lady Psyche the two
 arms;
 And so it was agreed when first they
 came;
 But Lady Psyche was the right hand
 now,
 And she the left, or not, or seldom used;
 Hers more than half the students, all
 the love.
 And so last night she fell to canvass
 you
 Her countrywomen! she did not envy
 her.
 "Who ever saw such wild barbarians?
 Girls?—more like men!" and at these
 words the snake,
 My secret, seem'd to stir within my
 breast;
 And oh, Sirs, could I help it, but my
 cheek

Began to burn and burn, and her lynx
eye
To fix and make me hotter, till she
laugh'd:
"O marvellously modest maiden, you!
Men! girls, like men! why, if they had
been men
You need not set your thoughts in ru-
bric thus
For wholesale comment." Pardon, I
am shamed
That I must needs repeat for my ex-
cuse
What looks so little graceful: "men"
(for still
My mother went revolving on the
word)
"And so they are,—very like men in-
deed—
And with that woman closeted for
hours!"
Then came these dreadful words out
one by one,
"Why—these—*are*—men:" I shud-
der'd: "and you know it."
"O ask me nothing," I said: "And
she knows too,
And she conceals it." So my mother
clutch'd
The truth at once, but with no word
from me;
And now thus early risen she goes to
inform
The Princess: Lady Psyche will be
crush'd;
But you may yet be saved, and there-
fore fly:
But heal me with your pardon ere you
go.'
'What pardon, sweet Melissa, for
a blush?'
Said Cyril: 'Pale one, blush again:
than wear
Those lilies, better blush our lives
away.
Yet let us breathe for one hour more
in Heaven'
He added, 'lest some classic Angel
speak
In scorn of us, "They mounted, Gany-
medes,
To tumble, Vulcans, on the second
morn."

But I will melt this marble into wax
To yield us farther furlough:' and he
went.

Melissa shook her doubtful curls,
and thought
He scarce would prosper. 'Tell us,'
Florian ask'd,
'How grew this feud betwixt the right
and left.'
'O long ago,' she said, 'betwixt these
two
Division smoulders hidden; 'tis my
mother,
Too jealous, often fretful as the wind
Pent in a crevice: much I bear with her:
I never knew my father, but she says
(God help her) she was wedded to a
fool;
And still she rail'd against the state
of things.
She had the care of Lady Ida's youth,
And from the Queen's decease she
brought her up.
But when your sister came she won
the heart
Of Ida: they were still together, grew
(For so they said themselves) inoscu-
lated;
Consonant chords that shiver to one
note;
One mind in all things: yet my mother
still
Affirms your Psyche thieved her theo-
ries,
And angled with them for her pupil's
love:
She calls her plagiarist: I know not
what:
But I must go: I dare not tarry,' and
light,
As flies the shadow of a bird, she fled.

Then murmur'd Florian gazing after
her,
'An open-hearted maiden, true and
pure.
If I could love, why this were she:
how pretty
Her blushing was, and how she
blush'd again,
As if to close with Cyril's random
wish:

Not like your Princess cramm'd with
erring pride,
Nor like poor Psyche whom she drags
in tow.

'The crane,' I said, 'may chatter of
the crane,
The dove may murmur of the dove,
but I
An eagle clang an eagle to the sphere.
My princess, O my princess! true she
errs,
But in her own grand way: being her-
self
Three times more noble than three
score of men,
She sees herself in every woman else,
And so she wears her error like a
crown
To blind the truth and me: for her,
and her,
Hebes are they to hand ambrosia, mix
The nectar; but—ah she—whene'er
she moves
The Samian Herè rises and she
speaks
A Memnon smitten with the morning
Sun.'

So saying from the court we paced,
and gain'd
The terrace ranged along the North-
ern front,
And leaning there on those balusters,
high
Above the empurpled champaign,
drank the gale
That blown about the foliage under-
neath,
And sated with the innumerable rose,
Beat balm upon your eyelids. Hither
came
Cyril, and yawning 'O hard task,' he
cried;
'No fighting shadows here! I forced
a way
Thro' solid opposition crabb'd and
gnarl'd.
Better to clear prime forests, heave
and thump
A league of street in summer solstice
down,
Than hammer at this reverend gentle-
woman.

I knock'd and, bidden, enter'd; found
her there
At point to move, and settled in her
eyes
The green malignant light of coming
storm.
Sir, I was courteous, every phrase well-
oil'd,
As man's could be; yet maiden-meek
I pray'd
Concealment: she demanded who we
were,
And why we came? I fabled nothing
fair,
But, your example pilot, told her all.
Up went the hush'd amaze of hand
and eye.
But when I dwelt upon your old
affiance,
She answer'd sharply that I talk'd
astray.
I urged the fierce inscription on the
gate,
And our three lives. True—we had
limed ourselves
With open eyes, and we must take
the chance.
But such extremes, I told her, well
might harm
The woman's cause. "Not more
than now," she said,
"So puddled as it is with favoritism."
I tried the mother's heart. Shame
might befall
Melissa, knowing, saying not she
knew:
Her answer was "Leave me to deal
with that."
I spoke of war to come and many
deaths,
And she replied, her duty was to
speak,
And duty duty, clear of consequences.
I grew discouraged, Sir; but since I
knew
No rock so hard but that a little wave
May beat admission in a thousand
years,
I recommenced; "decide not ere you
pause.
I find you here but in the second place,
Some say the third—the authentic
foundress you.

I offer boldly : we will seat you highest.
 Wink at our advent : help my prince
 to gain
 His rightful bride, and here I promise
 you
 Some palace in our land, where you
 shall reign
 The head and heart of all our fair she-
 world,
 And your great name flow on with
 broadening time
 For ever." Well, she balanced this a
 little,
 And told me she would answer us to-
 day,
 Meantime be mute : thus much, nor
 more I gain'd.'

He ceasing, came a message from
 the Head.
 'That afternoon the Princess rode to
 take
 The dip of certain strata to the North.
 Would we go with her? we should
 find the land
 Worth seeing; and the river made a
 fall
 Out yonder : ' then she pointed on to
 where
 A double hill ran up his furrowy forks
 Beyond the thick-leaved platans of the
 vale.

Agreed to, this, the day fled on thro'
 all
 Its range of duties to the appointed
 hour.
 Then summon'd to the porch we went.
 She stood
 Among her maidens, higher by the
 head,
 Her back against a pillar, her foot on
 one
 Of those tame leopards. Kittenlike
 he roll'd
 And paw'd about her sandal. I drew
 near;
 I gazed. On a sudden my strange
 seizure came
 Upon me, the weird vision of our
 house :
 The Princess Ida seem'd a hollow
 show,

Her gay-furr'd cats a painted fantasy,
 Her college and her maidens, empty
 masks,
 And I myself the shadow of a dream,
 For all things were and were not. Yet
 I felt
 My heart beat thick with passion and
 with awe;
 Then from my breast the involuntary
 sigh
 Brake, as she smote me with the light
 of eyes
 That lent my knee desire to kneel, and
 shook
 My pulses, till to horse we got, and so
 Went forth in long retinue following
 up
 The river as it narrow'd to the hills.

I rode beside her and to me she
 said :
 'O friend, we trust that you esteem'd
 us not
 Too harsh to your companion yester-
 morn;
 Unwillingly we spake ' 'No—not to
 her,'
 I answer'd, 'but to one of whom we
 spake
 Your Highness might have seem'd
 the thing you say.'
 'Again?' she cried, 'are you ambassa-
 dresses
 From him to me? we give you, being
 strange,
 A license : speak, and let the topic die.'

I stammer'd that I knew him—could
 have wish'd—
 'Our king expects—was there no pre-
 contract?
 There is no truer-hearted—ah, you
 seem
 All he prefigured, and he could not
 see
 The bird of passage flying south but
 long'd
 To follow : surely, if your Highness
 keep
 Your purport, you will shock him ev'n
 to death,
 Or baser courses, children of despair,'

'Poor boy,' she said, 'can he not
read—no books?
Quoit, tennis, ball—no games? nor
deals in that
Which men delight in, martial exercise?
To nurse a blind ideal like a girl,
Methinks he seems no better than a
girl;
As girls were once, as we ourself have
been:
We had our dreams; perhaps he mixt
with them:
We touch on our dead self, nor shun
to do it,
Being other—since we learnt our
meaning here,
To lift the woman's fall'n divinity
Upon an even pedestal with man.'

She paused, and added with a
haughtier smile
'And as to precontracts, we move,
my friend,
At no man's beck, but know ourself
and thee,
O Vashti, noble Vashti! Summon'd out
She kept her state, and left the
drunken king
To brawl at Shushan underneath the
the palms.'

'Alas your Highness breaths full
East,' I said,
'On that which leans to you. I know
the Prince,
I prize his truth: and then how vast a
work
To assail this gray preëminence of
man!
You grant me license; might I use it?
think;
Ere half be done perchance your life
may fail;
Then comes the feebler heiress of
your plan,
And takes and ruins all; and thus
your pains
May only make that footprint upon
sand
Which old-recurring waves of prej-
udice
Resmooth to nothing: might I dread
that you,

With only Fame for spouse and your
great deeds
For issue, yet may live in vain, and
miss,
Meanwhile, what every woman counts
her due,
Love, children, happiness?'
And she exclaim'd,
'Peace, you young savage of the
Northern wild!
What! tho' your Prince's love were
like a God's,
Have we not made ourself the sacri-
fice?
You are bold indeed: we are not talk'd
to thus:
Yet will we say for children, would
they grew
Like field-flowers everywhere! we like
them well:
But children die; and let me tell you,
girl,
Howe'er you babble, great deeds can-
not die;
They with the sun and moon renew
their light
For ever, blessing those that look on
them.
Children—that men may pluck them
from our hearts,
Kill us with pity, break us with our-
selves—
O—children—there is nothing upon
earth
More miserable than she that has a son
And sees him err: nor would we work
for fame;
Tho' she perhaps might reap the
applause of Great,
Who learns the one *POU STO* whence
afterhands
May move the world, tho' she herself
effect
But little; wherefore up and act, nor
shrink
For fear our solid aim be dissipated
By frail successors. Would, indeed,
we had been,
In lieu of many mortal flies, a race
Of giants living, each, a thousand
years,
That we might see our own work out,
and watch



"ERECT BEHIND A DESK OF SATIN-WOOD."—Page 39.

The sandy footprint harden into stone.'

I answer'd nothing, doubtful in myself
If that strange Poet-princess with her grand
Imaginations might at all be won.
And she broke out interpreting my thoughts :

'No doubt we seem a kind of monster to you;
We are used to that; for women, up till this
Cramp'd under worse than South-sea-isle taboo,
Dwarfs of the gynæceum, fail so far
In high desire, they know not, cannot guess
How much their welfare is a passion to us.
If we could give them surer, quicker proof—
Oh if our end were less achievable
By slow approaches, than by single act
Of immolation, any phase of death,
We were as prompt to spring against the pikes,
Or down the fiery gulf as talk of it,
To compass our dear sisters' liberties.'

She bow'd as if to veil a noble tear;
And up we came to where the river sloped
To plunge in cataract, shattering on black blocks
A breadth of thunder. O'er it shook the woods,
And danced the color, and, below, stuck out
The bones of some vast bulk that lived and roar'd
Before man was. She gazed awhile and said,
'As these rude bones to us, are we to her
That will be.' 'Dare we dream of that,' I ask'd,
'Which wrought us, as the workman and his work,
That practice betters?' 'How,' she cried, 'you love

The metaphysics! read and earn our prize,
A golden brooch: beneath an emerald plane
Sits Diotima, teaching him that died
Of hemlock; our device; wrought to the life;
She rapt upon her subject, he on her: For there are schools for all.' 'And yet?' I said
'Methinks I have not found among them all
One anatomic.' 'Nay, we thought of that,'
She answer'd, 'but it pleased us not: in truth
We shudder but to dream our maids should ape
Those monstrous males that carve the living hound,
And cram him with the fragments of the grave,
Or in the dark dissolving human heart,
And holy secrets of this microcosm, Dabbling a shameless hand with shameful jest,
Encarnalize their spirits: yet we know Knowledge is knowledge, and this matter hangs:
Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty, Nor willing men should come among us, learnt,
For many weary moons before we came,
This craft of healing. Were you sick, ourself
Would tend upon you. To your question now,
Which touches on the workman and his work.
Let there be light and there was light: 'tis so:
For was, and is, and will be, are but is;
And all creation is one act at once, The birth of light: but we that are not all,
As parts, can see but parts, now this, now that,
And live, perforce, from thought to thought, and make
One act a phantom of succession: thus

Our weakness somehow shapes the
shadow, Time;
But in the shadow will we work, and
mould

The woman to the fuller day.'

She spake
With kindled eyes: we rode a league
beyond,

And, o'er a bridge of pinewood cross-
ing, came

On flowery levels underneath the
crag,

Full of all beauty. 'O how sweet' I
said

(For I was half-oblivious of my mask)
'To linger here with one that loved
us.' 'Yea,'

The answer'd, 'or with fair philoso-
phies

That lift the fancy; for indeed these
fields

Are lovely, lovelier not the Elysian
lawns,

Where paced the Demigods of old,
and saw

The soft white vapor streak the
crowned towers

Built to the Sun: 'then, turning to her
maids,

'Pitch our pavilion here upon the
sward;

Lay out the viands.' At the word,
they raised

A tent of satin, elaborately wrought
With fair Corinna's triumph; here she
stood,

Engirt with many a florid maiden-
cheek,

The woman-conqueror; woman-con-
quer'd there

The bearded Victor of ten thousand
hymns,

And all the men mourn'd at his side:
but we

Set forth to climb; then, climbing,
Cyril kept

With Psyche, with Melissa Florian, I
With mine affianced. Many a little
hand

Glanced like a touch of sunshine on
the rocks,

Many a light foot shone like a jewel
set

In the dark crag: and then we turn'd,
we wound

About the cliffs, the copses, out and
in,

Hammering and clinking, chattering
stony names

Of shale and hornblende, rag and trap
and tuff,

Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the
Sun

Grew broader toward his death and
fell, and all

The rosy heights came out above the
lawns.

IV.

The splendor falls on castle walls

And snowy summits old in story:

The long light shakes across the lakes,

And the wild cataract leaps in glory.

Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes fly-
ing,

Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dy-
ing, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,

And thinner, clearer, farther going!

O sweet and far from cliff and scar

The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!

Blow, let us hear the purple glens reply-
ing:

Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying,
dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,

They faint on hill or field or river:

Our echoes roll from soul to soul,

And grow for ever and for ever.

Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes fly-
ing,

And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying,
dying.

'There sinks the nebulous star we call
the Sun,

If that hypothesis of theirs be sound'

Said Ida; 'Let us down and rest;'
and we

Down from the lean and wrinkled
precipices,

By every coppice-feather'd chasm and
cleft,

Dropt through the ambrosial gloom to
where below
No bigger than a glow-worm shone
the tent
Lamp-lit from the inner. Once she
lean'd on me,
Descending; once or twice she lent
her hand,
And blissful palpitations in the blood,
Stirring a sudden transport rose and
fell.

But when we planted level feet, and
dipt
Beneath the satin dome and enter'd in,
There leaning deep in broider'd down
we sank
Our elbows: on a tripod in the midst
A fragrant flame rose, and before us
glow'd
Fruit, blossom, viand, amber wine,
and gold.

Then she, 'Let some one sing to us:
lightlier move
The minutes fledged with music:' and
a maid,
Of those beside her, smote her harp,
and sang.

'Tears, idle tears, I know not what they
mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine de-
spair
Rise in the heart and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

'Fresh as the first beam glittering on a
sail,
That brings our friends up from the under-
world,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the
verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

'Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer
dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering
square;

So sad, so strange, the days that are no
more.

'Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy
feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.'

She ended with such passion that
the tear,
She sang of, shook and fell, an err-
ing pearl
Lost in her bosom: but with some
disdain
Answer'd the Princess, 'If indeed
there haunt
About the moulder'd lodges of the
Past
So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to
men,
Well needs it we should cram our ears
with wool
And so pace by: but thine are fancies
hatch'd
In silken-folded idleness; nor is it
Wiser to weep a true occasion lost,
But trim our sails, and let old bygones
be,
While down the streams that float us
each and all
To the issue, goes, like glittering bergs
of ice,
Throne after throne, and molten on
the waste
Becomes a cloud: for all things serve
their time
Toward that great year of equal
mights and rights,
Nor would I fight with iron laws, in
the end
Found golden: let the past be past;
let be
Their cancell'd Babels: tho' the
rough kex break
The starr'd mosaic, and the beard-
blown goat
Hang on the shaft, and the wild fig-
tree split
Their monstrous idols, care not while
we hear

A trumpet in the distance pealing
 news
 Of better, and Hope, a poising eagle,
 burns
 Above the unrisen morrow : ' then to
 me ;
 ' Know you no song of your own land,'
 she said,
 ' Not such as moans about the retro-
 spect,
 But deals with the other distance and
 the hues
 Of promise ; not a death's-head at the
 wine.'

Then I remember'd one myself had
 made,
 What time I watch'd the swallow
 winging south
 From mine own land, part made long
 since, and part
 Now while I sang, and maidenlike as far
 As I could ape their treble, did I sing.

' O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying
 South,
 Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,
 And tell her, tell her, what I tell to thee.

' O tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest
 each,
 That bright and fierce and fickle is the
 South,
 And dark and true and tender is the North.

' O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow,
 and light
 Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,
 And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

' O were I thou that she might take me
 in,
 And lay me on her bosom, and her heart
 Would rock the snowy cradle till I died.

' Why lingereth she to clothe her heart
 with love,
 Delaying as the tender ash delays
 To clothe herself, when all the woods are
 green ?

' O tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is
 flown :
 Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,
 But in the North long since my nest is
 made.

' O tell her, brief is life but love is long,
 And brief the sun of summer in the North,
 And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

' O Swallow, flying from the golden
 woods,
 Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and
 make her mine,
 And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee.'

I ceased, and all the ladies, each
 at each,
 Like the Ithacensian suitors in old
 time,
 Stared with great eyes, and laugh'd
 with alien lips,
 And knew not what they meant ; for
 still my voice
 Rang false : but smiling ' Not for
 thee,' she said,
 ' O Bulbul, any rose of Gulistan
 Shall burst her veil : marsh-divers,
 rather, maid,
 Shall croak thee sister, or the meadow-
 crane
 Grate her harsh kindred in the grass :
 and this
 A mere love-poem ! O for such, my
 friend,
 We hold them slight : they mind us
 of the time
 When we made bricks in Egypt.
 Knaves are men,
 That lute and flute fantastic tender-
 ness,
 And dress the victim to the offering
 up.
 And paint the gates of Hell with
 Paradise,
 And play the slave to gain the tyr-
 anny.
 Poor soul ! I had a maid of honor
 once ;
 She wept her true eyes blind for such
 a one,
 A rogue of canzonets and serenades.
 I loved her. Peace be with her. She
 is dead.
 So they blaspheme the muse ! But
 great is song
 Used to great ends : ourself have
 often tried
 Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm have
 dash'd

The passion of the prophetess ; for
song
Is duer unto freedom, force and
growth
Of spirit than to junketing and love.
Love is it ? Would this same mock-
love, and this
Mock-Hymen were laid up like winter
bats,
Till all men grew to rate us at our
worth,
Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty
babes
To be dandled, no, but living wills,
and sphered
Whole in ourselves and owed to none.
Enough !
But now to leaven play with profit,
you,
Know you no song, the true growth of
your soil,
That gives the manners of your coun-
try-women ?'

She spoke and turn'd her sumptu-
ous head with eyes
Of shining expectation fixt on mine.
Then while I dragg'd my brains for
such a song,
Cyril, with whom the bell-mouth'd
glass had wrought,
Or master'd by the sense of sport,
began
To troll a careless, careless tavern-
catch
Of Moll and Meg, and strange experi-
ences
Unmeet for ladies. Florian nodded
at him,
I frowning ; Psyche flush'd and
wann'd and shook ;
The lilylike Melissa droop'd her
brows ;
'Forbear,' the Princess cried ; 'For-
bear, Sir' I ;
And heated thro' and thro' with
wrath and love,
I smote him on the breast ; he started
up ;
There rose a shriek as of a city
sack'd ;
Melissa clamor'd 'Flee the death ;'
'To horse'

Said Ida ; 'home ! to horse !' and
fled, as flies
A troop of snowy doves athwart the
dusk,
When some one batters at the dove-
cote-doors,
Disorderly the women. Alone I
stood
With Florian, cursing Cyril, vext at
heart,
In the pavilion : there like parting
hopes
I heard them passing from me : hoof
by hoof,
And every hoof a knell to my desires,
Clang'd on the bridge ; and then
another shriek,
'The Head, the Head, the Princess ;
O the Head !'
For blind with rage she miss'd the
plank, and roll'd
In the river. Out I sprang from
gloom to gloom :
There whirl'd her white robe like a
blossom'd branch
Rapt to the horrible fall : a glance I
gave,
No more ; but woman vested as I was
Plunged ; and the flood drew ; yet I
caught her ; then
Oaring one arm and bearing in my
left
The weight of all the hopes of half
the world,
Strove to buffet to land in vain. A
tree
Was half-disrooted from his place and
stoop'd
To drench his dark locks in the gur-
gling wave
Mid-channel. Right on this we drove
and caught,
And grasping down the boughs I
gain'd the shore.

There stood her maidens glimmer-
ingly group'd
In the hollow bank. One reaching
forward drew
My burthen from mipe arms ; they
cried 'she lives :'
They bore her back into the tent : but
I,

So much a kind of shame within me
wrought,
Not yet endured to meet her opening
eyes,
Nor found my friends; but push'd
alone on foot
(For since her horse was lost I left her
mine)
Across the woods, and less from
Indian craft
Than beelike instinct hiveward, found
at length
The garden portals. Two great
statues, Art
And Science, Caryatids, lifted up
A weight of emblem, and betwixt were
valves
Of open-work in which the hunter-
rued
His rash intrusion, manlike, but his
brows
Had sprouted, and the branches there-
upon
Spread out at top, and grimly spiked
the gates.

A little space was left between the
horns,
Thro' which I clamber'd o'er at top
with pain,
Dropt on the sward, and up the linden
walks,
And, tost on thoughts that changed
from hue to hue,
Now poring on the glowworm, now
the star,
I paced the terrace, till the Bear had
wheel'd
Thro' a great arc his seven slow suns.

A step
Of lightest echo, then a loftier form
Than female, moving thro' the
uncertain gloom,
Disturb'd me with the doubt 'if this
were she,'
But it was Florian. 'Hist O Hist,' he
said,
'They seek us: out so late is out of
rules.
Moreover 'seize the strangers' is the
cry.
How came you here?' I told him: 'I'
said he,

'Last of the train, a moral leper, I,
To whom none spake, half-sick at
heart, return'd.
Arriving all confused among the rest
With hooded brows I crept into the
hall,
And, couch'd behind a Judith, under-
neath
The head of Holofernes peep'd and
saw.
Girl after girl was call'd to trial: each
Disclaim'd all knowledge of us: last
of all,
Melissa: trust me, Sir, I pitied her.
She, question'd if she knew us men, at
first
Was silent; closer prest, denied it not:
And then, demanded if her mother
knew,
Or Psyche, she affirm'd not, or denied:
From whence the Royal mind, familiar
with her,
Easily gather'd either guilt. She sent
For Psyche, but she was not there;
she call'd
For Psyche's child to cast it from the
doors;
She sent for Blanche to accuse her
face to face;
And I slipt out; but whither will you
now?
And where are Psyche, Cyril? both
are fled;
What, if together? that were not so
well.
Would rather we had never come! I
dread
His wildness, and the chances of the
dark.'

'And yet,' I said, 'you wrong him
more than I
That struck him: this is proper to the
clown,
Tho' smock'd, or furr'd and purpled,
still the clown,
To harm the thing that trusts him,
and to shame
That which he says he loves: for
Cyril, howe'er
He deal in frolic, as to-night—the song
Might have been worse and sinn'd in
grosser lips

Beyond all pardon—as it is, I hold
These flashes on the surface are not he.
He has a solid base of temperament:
But as the waterlily starts and slides
Upon the level in little puffs of wind,
Tho' anchor'd to the bottom, such is
he.'

Scarce had I ceased when from a
tamarisk near
Two Proctors leapt upon us, crying,
'Names:.'
He, standing still, was clutch'd; but
I began
To thrird the musky-circled mazes,
wind
And double in 'and out the boles, and
race
By all the fountains: fleet I was of
foot:
Before me shower'd the rose in
flakes; behind
I heard the puff'd pursuer; at mine
ear
Bubbled the nightingale and heeded
not,
And secret laughter tickled all my
soul.
At last I hook'd my ankle in a vine,
That claspt the feet of a Mnemosyne,
And falling on my face was caught
and known.

They haled us to the Princess where
she sat
High in the hall: above her droop'd
a lamp,
And made the single jewel on her
brow
Burn like the mystic fire on a mast-
head,
Prophet of storm: a handmaid on each
side
Bow'd toward her, combing out her
long black hair
Damp from the river; and close
behind her stood
Eight daughters of the plough,
stronger than men,
Huge women blowz'd with health,
and wind, and rain,
And labor. Each was like a Druid
rock;

Or like a spire of land that stands
apart
Cleft from the main, and wail'd about
with mews.

Then, as we came, the crowd divid-
ing clove
An advent to the throne: and therebe-
side,
Half-naked as if caught at once from
bed
And tumbled on the purple footcloth,
lay
The lily-shining child; and on the
left,
Bow'd on her palms and folded up
from wrong,
Her round white shoulder shaken with
her sobs,
Melissa knelt; but Lady Blanche
erect
Stood up and spake, an affluent orator.

'It was not thus, O Princess, in old
days:
You prized my counsel, lived upon
my lips:
I led you then to all the Castalies;
I fed you with the milk of every Muse;
I loved you like this kneeler, and you
me
Your second mother: those were
gracious times.
Then came your new friend: you
began to change—
I saw it and grieved—to slacken and
to cool;
Till taken with her seeming openness
You turn'd your warmer currents all
to her,
To me you froze: this was my meed
for all.
Yet I bore up in part from ancient
love,
And partly that I hoped to win you
back,
And partly conscious of my own
deserts,
And partly that you were my civil head,
And chiefly you were born for some-
thing great,
In which I might your fellow-worker
be,

When time should serve ; and thus a
 noble scheme
 Grew up from seed we two long since
 had sown ;
 In us true growth, in her a Jonah's
 gourd,
 Up in one night and due to sudden sun:
 We took this palace ; but even from
 the first
 You stood in your own light and
 darken'd mine.
 What student came but that you
 planed her path
 To Lady Psyche, younger, not so wise,
 A foreigner, and I your countrywoman,
 I your old friend and tried, she new
 in all ?
 But still her lists were swell'd and
 mine were lean ;
 Yet I bore up in hope she would be
 known :
 Then came these wolves : *they* knew
 her : *they* endured,
 Long-closeted with her the yestermorn,
 To tell her what they were, and she to
 hear :
 And me none told : not less to an
 eye like mine
 A lidless watcher of the public weal,
 Last night, their mask was patent, and
 my foot
 Was to you : but I thought again : I
 fear'd
 To meet a cold " We thank you, we
 shall hear of it
 From Lady Psyche : " you had gone
 to her,
 She told, perforce ; and winning easy
 grace,
 No doubt, for slight delay, remain'd
 among us
 In our young nursery still unknown,
 the stem
 Less grain than touchwood, while my
 honest heat
 Were all miscounted as malignant
 haste
 To push my rival out of place and
 power.
 But public use required she should be
 known ;
 And since my oath was ta'en for
 public use,

I broke the letter of it to keep the
 sense.
 I spoke not then at first, but watch'd
 them well,
 Saw that they kept apart, no mischief
 done ;
 And yet this day (tho' you should hate
 me for it)
 I came to tell you ; found that you
 had gone,
 Ridd'n to the hills, she likewise : now,
 I thought,
 That surely she will speak ; if not,
 then I :
 Did she ? These monsters blazon'd
 what they were,
 According to the coarseness of their
 kind,
 For thus I hear ; and known at last (my
 work)
 And full of cowardice and guilty
 shame,
 I grant in her some sense of shame,
 she flies ;
 And I remain on whom to wreak your
 rage,
 I, that have lent my life to build up
 yours,
 I that have wasted here health, wealth,
 and time,
 And talent, I—you know it—I will not
 boast :
 Dismiss me, and I prophesy your plan,
 Divorced from my experience, will be
 chaff
 For every gust of chance, and men will
 say
 We did not know the real light, but
 chased
 The wisp that flickers where no foot
 can tread.'

She ceased : the Princess answer'd
 coldly, ' Good :
 Your oath is broken : we dismiss you :
 go.
 For this lost lamb (she pointed to the
 child)
 Our mind is changed : we take it to
 ourselves.'

Thereat the Lady stretch'd a vulture
 throat,

And shot from crooked lips a haggard smile.

'The plan was mine. I built the nest'
she said

'To hatch the cuckoo. Rise!' and stoop'd to updrag

Melissa: she, half on her mother propt,

Half-drooping from her, turn'd her face, and cast

A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer,
Which melted Florian's fancy as she hung,

A Niobëan daughter, one arm out,
Appealing to the bolts of Heaven;
and while

We gazed upon her came a little stir
About the doors, and on a sudden rush'd

Among us, out of breath, as one pursued,

A woman-post in flying raiment.
Fear

Stared in her eyes, and chalk'd her face, and wing'd

Her transit to the throne, whereby she fell

Delivering seal'd dispatches which the Head

Took half-amazed, and in her lion's mood

Tore open, silent we with blind surmise

Regarding, while she read, till over brow

And cheek and bosom brake the wrathful bloom

As of some fire against a stormy cloud,
When the wild peasant rights himself,
the rick

Flames, and his anger reddens in the heavens;

For anger most it seem'd, while now her breast,

Beaten with some great passion at her heart,

Palpitated, her hand shook, and we heard

In the dead hush the papers that she held

Rustle: at once the lost lamb at her feet

Sent out a bitter bleating for its dam;

The plaintive cry jarr'd on her ire; she crush'd

The scrolls together, made a sudden turn

As if to speak, but, utterance failing her,

She whirl'd them on to me, as who should say

'Read,' and I read—two letters—one her sire's.

'Fair daughter, when we sent the Prince your way

We knew not your ungracious laws,
which learnt,

We, conscious of what temper you are built,

Came all in haste to hinder wrong,
but fell

Into his father's hands, who has this night,

You lying close upon his territory,
Slipt round and in the dark invested

you,
And here he keeps me hostage for his son.'

The second was my father's running thus:

'You have our son: touch not a hair of his head:

Render him up unscathed: give him your hand:

Cleave to your contract: tho' indeed we hear

You hold the woman is the better man;

A rampant heresy, such as if it spread
Would make all women kick against
their Lords

Thro' all the world, and which might well deserve

That we this night should pluck your palace down;

And we will do it, unless you send us back

Our son, on the instant, whole.'

So far I read;

And then stood up and spoke impetuously.

'O not to pry and peer on your reserve,

But led by golden wishes, and a hope
 The child of regal compact, did I
 break
 Your precinct; not a scorner of your sex
 But venerator, zealous it should be
 All that it might be: hear me, for I
 bear,
 Tho' man, yet human, whatsoe'er your
 wrongs,
 From the flaxen curl to the gray lock
 a life
 Less mine than yours: my nurse
 would tell me of you;
 I babbled for you, as babies for the
 moon,
 Vague brightness; when a boy, you
 stoop'd to me
 From all high places, lived in all fair
 lights,
 Came in long breezes rapt from
 inmost south
 And blown to inmost north; at eve
 and dawn
 With Ida, Ida, Ida, rang the woods;
 The leader wildswan in among the
 stars
 Would clang it, and lapt in wreaths of
 glowworm light
 The mellow breaker murmur'd Ida.
 Now,
 Because I would have reach'd you,
 had you been
 Sphered up with Cassiopëia, or the
 enthroned
 Persephonë in Hades, now at length,
 Those winters of abeyance all worn
 out,
 A man I came to see you: but, indeed,
 Not in this frequency can I lend full
 tongue,
 O noble Ida, to those thoughts that
 wait
 On you, their centre: let me say but
 this,
 That many a famous man and woman,
 town
 And landskip, have I heard of, after
 seen
 The dwarfs of presage: tho' when
 known, there grew
 Another kind of beauty in detail
 Made them worth knowing; but in
 you I found

My boyish dream involved and daz-
 zled down
 And master'd, while that-after-beauty
 makes
 Such head from act to act, from hour
 to hour,
 Within me, that except you slay me
 here,
 According to your bitter statute-book,
 I cannot cease to follow you, as they
 say
 The seal does music; who desire you
 more
 Than growing boys their manhood;
 dying lips,
 With many thousand matters left to
 do,
 The breath of life; O more than poor
 men wealth,
 Than sick men health—yours, yours,
 not mine—but half
 Without you; with you, whole; and
 of those halves
 You worthiest; and howe'er you
 block and bar
 Your heart with system out from
 mine, I hold
 That it becomes no man to nurse
 despair,
 But in the teeth of clench'd antago-
 nisms
 To follow up the worthiest till he die:
 Yet that I came not all unauthorized
 Behold your father's letter.'

On one knee

Kneeling, I gave it, which she caught,
 And dash'd
 Unopen'd at her feet: a tide of fierce
 Invective seem'd to wait behind her
 lips,
 As waits a river level with the dam
 Ready to burst and flood the world
 with foam:
 And so she would have spoken, but
 there rose
 A hubbub in the court of half the
 maids
 Gather'd together: from the illumined
 hall
 Long lanes of splendor slanted o'er a
 press
 Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded
 ewes,

And rainbow robes, and gems and
gemlike eyes,
And gold and golden heads; they to
and fro
Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some
red, some pale,
All open-mouth'd, all gazing to the
light,
Some crying there was an army in the
land,
And some that men were in the very
walls,
And some they cared not; till a
clamor grew
As of a new-world Babel, woman-built,
And worse-confounded: high above
them stood
The placid marble Muses, looking
peace.

Not peace she look'd, the Head: but
rising up
Robed in the long night of her deep
hair, so
To the open window moved, remaining
there
Fixt like a beacon-tower above the
waves
Of tempest, when the crimson-rolling
eye
Glares ruin, and the wild birds on the
light
Dash themselves dead. She stretch'd
her arms and call'd
Across the tumult and the tumult fell.

'What fear ye, brawlers? am not I
your Head?
On me, me, me, the storm first breaks:
I dare
All these male thunderbolts: 'what is
it ye fear?
Peace! there are those to avenge us
and they come:
If not,—myself were like enough, O
girls,
To unfurl the maiden banner of our
rights,
And clad in iron burst the ranks of
war,
Or, falling, protomartyr of our cause,
Die: yet I blame you not so much for
fear;

Six thousand years of fear have made
you that
From which I would redeem you: but
for those
That stir this hubbub—you and you
—I know
Your faces there in the crowd—to-mor-
row morn
We hold a great convention: then
shall they
That love their voices more than duty,
learn
With whom they deal, dismiss'd in
shame to live
No wiser than their mothers, house-
hold stuff,
Live chattels, mincers of each other's
fame,
Full of weak poison, turnspits for the
clown,
The drunkard's football, laughing-
stocks of Time,
Whose brains are in their hands and
in their heels,
But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance, to
thrum,
To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and
to scour,
For ever slaves at home and fools
abroad.'

She ending, waved her hands: there-
at the crowd
Muttering, dissolved: then with a
smile, that look'd
A stroke of cruel sunshine on the cliff,
When all the glens are drown'd in
azure gloom
Of thunder-shower, she floated to us
and said:

'You have done well and like a
gentleman,
And like a prince: you have our
thanks for all:
And you look well too in your woman's
dress:
Well have you done and like a gentle-
man.
You saved our life: we owe you
bitter thanks:
Better have died and spilt our bones
in the flood—

Then men had said—but now—What
 hinders me
 To take such bloody vengeance on you
 both ?
 Yet since our father—Wasps in our
 good hive,
 You would-be quenchers of the light
 to be,
 Barbarians, grosser than your native
 bears—
 O would I had his sceptre for one
 hour !
 You that have dared to break our
 bound, and gull'd
 Our servants, wrong'd and lied and
 thwarted us—
 I wed with thee ! I bound by precon-
 tract
 Your bride, your bonds slave ! not tho'
 all the gold
 That veins the world were pack'd to
 make your crown,
 And every spoken tongue should lord
 you. Sir,
 Your falsehood and yourself are hate-
 ful to us :
 I trample on your offers and on you :
 Begone : we will not look upon you
 more.
 Here, push them out at gates.'
 In wrath she spake.
 Then those eight mighty daughters of
 the plough
 Bent their broad faces toward us and
 address'd
 Their motion : twice I sought to plead
 my cause,
 But on my shoulder hung their heavy
 hands,
 The weight of destiny : so from her face
 They pushed us, down the steps, and
 thro' the court,
 And with grim laughter thrust us out
 at gates.

We cross'd the street and gain'd a
 petty mound
 Beyond it, whence we saw the lights
 and heard
 The voices murmuring. While I
 listen'd, came
 On a sudden the weird seizure and the
 doubt :

I seem'd to move among a world of
 ghosts ;
 The Princess with her monstrous
 woman-guard,
 The jest and earnest working side by
 side,
 The cataract and the tumult and the
 kings
 Were shadows ; and the long fantastic
 night
 With all its doings had and had not
 been,
 And all things were and were not.
 This went by
 As strangely as it came, and on my
 spirits
 Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy ;
 Not long ; I shook it off ; for spite of
 doubts
 And sudden ghostly shadowings I was
 one
 To whom the touch of all mischance
 but came
 As night to him that sitting on a hill
 Sees the midsummer, midnight, Nor-
 way sun
 Set into sunrise ; then we moved
 away.

Thy voice is heard thro' rolling drums,
 That beat to battle where he stands ;
 Thy face across his fancy comes,
 And gives the battle to his hands :
 A moment, while the trumpets blow,
 He sees his brood about thy knee ;
 The next, like fire he meets the foe,
 And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

So Lilia sang : we thought her half-
 possess'd,
 She struck such warbling fury thro'
 the words ;
 And, after, feigning pique at what she
 call'd
 The raillery, or grotesque, or false
 sublime—
 Like one that wishes at a dance to
 change
 The music—clapt her hands and cried
 for war,
 Or some grand fight to kill and make
 an end :
 And he that next inherited the tale

Half turning to the broken statue,
said,
‘Sir Ralph has got your colors: if I
prove
Your knight, and fight your battle,
what for me?’
It chanced, her empty glove upon the
tomb
Lay by her like a model of her hand.
She took it and she flung it. ‘Fight,’
she said,
‘And make us all we would be, great
and good.’
He knightlike in his cap instead of
casque,
A cap of Tyrol borrow’d from the
hall,
Arranged the favor, and assumed the
Prince.

v.

Now, scarce three paces measured
from the mound,
We stumbled on a stationary voice,
And ‘Stand, who goes?’ ‘Two from
the palace’ I.
‘The second two: they wait,’ he said,
‘pass on;
His Highness wakes:’ and one, that
clash’d in arms,
By glimmering lanes and walls of can-
vas led
Threading the soldier-city, till we
heard
The drowsy folds of our great ensign
shake
From blazon’d lions o’er the imperial
tent
Whispers of war.

Entering, the sudden light
Dazed me half-blind: I stood and
seem’d to hear,
As in a poplar grove when a light
wind wakes
A lisping of the innumerable leaf and
dies,
Each hissing in his neighbor’s ear;
and then
A strangled titter, out of which there
brake
On all sides, clamoring etiquette to
death,

Unmeasured mirth; while now the
two old kings
Began to wag their baldness up and
down,
The fresh young captains flash’d their
glittering teeth,
The huge bush-bearded Barons heaved
and blew,
And slain with laughter roll’d the
gilded Squire.

At length my Sire, his rough cheek
wet with tears,
Panted from weary sides ‘King, you
are free!
We did but keep you surety for our
son,
If this be he,—or a draggled mawkin,
thou,
That tends her bristled grunTERS in the
sludge:’
For I was drench’d with ooze and
torn with briers,
More crumpled than a poppy from the
sheath,
And all one rag, disprincED from head
to heel.
Then some one sent beneath his
vaulted palm
A whisper’d jest to some one near
him, ‘Look,
He has been among his shadows.’
‘Satan take
The old women and their shadows!
(thus the King
Roar’d) make yourself a man to fight
with men.
Go: Cyril told us all.’

As boys that slink
From ferule and the trespass-chiding
eye,
Away we stole, and transient in a trice
From what was left of faded woman-
slough
To sheathing splendors and the golden
scale
Of harness, issued in the sun, that
now
Leapt from the dewy shoulders of the
Earth,
And hit the Northern hills. Here
Cyril met us.
A little shy at first, but by and by

We twain, with mutual pardon ask'd
 and given
 For stroke and song, resolder'd peace,
 whereon
 Follow'd his tale. Amazed he fled
 away
 Thro' the dark land, and later in the
 night
 Had come on Pysche weeping: 'then
 we fell
 Into your father's hand, and there she
 lies,
 But will not speak, nor stir.'

He show'd a tent
 A stone-shot off: we enter'd in, and
 there
 Among piled arms and rough accou-
 trements,
 Pitiful sight, wrapp'd in a soldier's
 cloak,
 Like some sweet sculpture draped
 from head to foot,
 And push'd by rude hands from its
 pedestal,
 All her fair length upon the ground
 she lay:
 And at her head a follower of the
 camp,
 A charr'd and wrinkled piece of
 womanhood,
 Sat watching like a watcher by the
 dead.

Then Florian knelt, and 'Come' he
 whisper'd to her,
 'Lift up your head, sweet sister: lie
 not thus.
 What have you done but right? you
 could not slay
 Me, nor your prince: look up: be
 comforted:
 Sweet is it to have done the thing one
 ought,
 When fall'n in darker ways.' And
 likewise I:
 'Be comforted: have I not lost her
 too,
 In whose least act abides the name-
 less charm
 That none has else for me?' She
 heard, she moved,
 She moan'd, a folded voice; and up
 she sat,

And raised the cloak from brows as
 pale and smooth
 As those that mourn half-shrouded
 over death
 In deathless marble. 'Her,' she said,
 'my friend—
 Parted from her—betray'd her cause
 and mine—
 Where shall I breathe? why kept ye
 not your faith?
 O base and bad! what comfort? none
 for me!'
 To whom remorseful Cýril, 'Yet I
 pray
 Take comfort: live, dear lady, for
 your child!'
 At which she lifted up her voice and
 cried.
 'Ah me, my babe, my blossom, ah,
 my child,
 My one sweet child, whom I shall see
 no more!
 For now will cruel Ida keep her back;
 And either she will die for want of
 care,
 Or sicken with ill-usage, when they say
 The child is hers—for every little fault,
 The child is hers; and they will beat
 my girl
 Remembering her mother: O my
 flower!
 Or they will take her, they will make
 her hard,
 And she will pass me by in after-life
 With some cold reverence worse than
 were she dead.
 Ill mother that I was to leave her
 there,
 To lag behind, scared by the cry they
 made,
 The horror of the shame among them
 all:
 But I will go and sit beside the doors,
 And lay my little blossom at my feet,
 My babe, my sweet Aglaïa, my one
 child:
 And I will take her up and go my
 way,
 And satisfy my soul with kissing her:

Ah ! what might that man not deserve
of me
Who gave me back my child ? ' ' Be
comforted,'
Said Cyril, 'you shall have it:' but
again
She veil'd her brows, and prone she
sank, and so
Like tender things that being caught
feign death,
Spoke not, nor stirr'd.

By this a murmur ran
Thro' all the camp and inward raced
the scouts
With rumor of Prince Arac hard at
hand.

We left her by the woman, and without
Found the gray kings at parle: and
' Look you ' cried

My father 'that our compact be ful-
fill'd :

You have spoilt this child; she laughs
at you and man :

She wrongs herself, her sex, and me,
and him :

But red-faced war has rods of steel and
fire ;

She yields, or war.'

Then Gama turn'd to me :
' We fear, indeed, you spent a stormy
time

With our strange girl : and yet they
say that still

You love her. Give us, then, your
mind at large :

How say you, war or not ? '

' Not war, if possible,
O king,' I said, 'lest from the abuse of
war,

The desecrated shrine, the trampled
year,

The smouldering homestead, and the
household flower

Torn from the lintel—all the common
wrong—

A smoke go up thro' which I loom to
her

Three times a monster : now she
lightens scorn

At him that mars her plan, but then
would hate

(And every voice she talk'd with ratify
it,

And every face she look'd on justify it)
The general foe. More soluble is this
knot,

By gentleness than war. I want her
love.

What were I nigher this altho' we
dash'd

Your cities into shards with catapults,
She would not love ;—or brought her
chain'd, a slave,

The lifting of whose eyelash is my
lord,

Not ever would she love ; but brood-
ing turn

The book of scorn, till all my flitting
chance

Were caught within the record of her
wrongs,

And crush'd to death : and rather, Sire,
than this

I would the old God of war himself
were dead,

Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills,
Rotting on some wild shore with ribs
of wreck,

Or like an old-world mammoth bulk'd
in ice,

Not to be molten out.'

And roughly spake
My father, 'Tut, you know them not,
the girls.

Boy, when I hear you prate I almost
think

That idiot legend credible. Look you,
Sir !

Man is the hunter ; woman is his
game :

The sleek and shining creatures of the
chase,

We hunt them for the beauty of their
skins ;

They love us for it, and we ride them
down.

Wheedling and siding with them !
Out ! for shame !

Boy, there's no rose that's half so dear
to them

As he that does the thing they dare
not do,

Breathing and sounding beauteous
battle, comes

With the air of the trumpet round
him, and leaps in

Among the women, snares them by the
 score
 Flatter'd and fluster'd, wins, tho'
 dash'd with death
 He reddens what he kisses: thus I
 won
 Your mother, a good mother, a good
 wife,
 Worth winning; but this firebrand—
 gentleness
 To such as her! if Cyril spake her
 true,
 To catch a dragon in a cherry net,
 To trip a tigress with a gossamer,
 Were wisdom to it.
 'Yea but Sire,' I cried,
 'Wild natures need wise curbs. The
 soldier? No:
 What dares not Ida do that she should
 prize
 The soldier? I beheld her, when she
 rose
 The yesternight, and storming in
 extremes,
 Stood for her cause, and flung defiance
 down
 Gagelike to man, and had not shunn'd
 the death,
 No, not the soldier's: yet I hold her,
 king,
 True woman: but you clash them all
 in one,
 That have as many differences as we.
 The violet varies from the lily as far
 As oak from elm: one loves the
 soldier, one
 The silken priest of peace, one this,
 one that,
 And some unworthily; their sinless
 faith,
 A maiden moon that sparkles on a sty,
 Glorifying clown and satyr; whence
 they need
 More breadth of culture: is not Ida
 right?
 They worth it? truer to the law within?
 Severer in the logic of a life?
 Twice as magnetic to sweet influences
 Of earth and heaven? and she of
 whom you speak,
 My mother, looks as whole as some
 serene
 Creation minted in the golden moods

Of sovereign artists; not a thought, a
 touch,
 But pure as lines of green that streak
 the white
 Of the first snowdrop's inner leaves; I
 say,
 Not like the piebald miscellany, man,
 Bursts of great heart and slips in
 sensual mire,
 But whole and one: and take them
 all-in-all,
 Were we ourselves but half as good,
 as kind,
 As truthful, much that Ida claims as
 right
 Had ne'er been mooted, but as frankly
 theirs
 As dues of Nature. To our point: not
 war:
 Lest I lose all.'
 'Nay, nay, you spake but sense'
 Said Gama. 'We remember love
 ourselves
 In our sweet youth; we did not rate
 him then
 This red-hot iron to be shaped with
 blows.
 You talk almost like Ida: *she* can
 talk;
 And there is something in it as you
 say:
 But you talk kindlier: we esteem you
 for it.—
 He seems a gracious and a gallant
 Prince,
 I would he had our daughter: for the
 rest,
 Our own detention, why, the causes
 weigh'd,—
 Fatherly fears—you used us cour-
 teously—
 We would do much to gratify your
 Prince—
 We pardon it; and for your ingress
 here
 Upon the skirt and fringe of our fair
 land,
 You did but come as goblins in the
 night,
 Nor in the furrow broke the plough-
 man's head,
 Nor burnt the grange, nor buss'd the
 milking-maid,

Nor robb'd the farmer of his bowl of
cream :
But let your Prince (our royal word
upon it,
He comes back safe) ride with us to
our lines,
And speak with Arac : Arac's word is
thrice
As ours with Ida : something may be
done—

I know not what—and ours shall see
us friends.
You, likewise, our late guests, if so
you will,
Follow us : who knows ? we four may
build some plan
Foursquare to opposition.'

Here he reach'd
White hands of farewell to my sire,
who growl'd
An answer which, half-muffled in his
beard,
Let so much out as gave us leave to
go.

Then rode we with the old king
across the lawns
Beneath huge trees, a thousand rings
of Spring
In every bole, a song on every spray
Of birds that piped their Valentines,
and woke
Desire in me to infuse my tale of love
In the old king's ears, who promised
help, and oozed
All o'er with honey'd answer as we
rode
And blossom-fragrant slipt the heavy
dews
Gather'd by night and peace, with
each light air
On our mail'd heads : but other
thoughts than Peace
Burnt in us, when we saw the embat-
tled squares,
And squadrons of the Prince, tramp-
ling the flowers
With clamor : for among them rose a
cry
As if to greet the king ; they made a
halt ;
The horses yell'd ; they clash'd their
arms ; the drum

Beat ; merrily-blowing shrill'd the
martial life ;
And in the blast and bray of the long
horn
And serpent-throated bugle, undu-
lated
The banner : anon to meet us lightly
pranced
Three captains out : nor ever had I
seen
Such thews of men : the midmost and
the highest
Was Arac : all about his motion
clung
The shadow of his sister, as the beam
Of the East, that play'd upon them,
made them glance
Like those three stars of the airy
Giant's zone,
That glitter burnish'd by the frosty
dark ;
And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,
And bickers into red and emerald,
shone
Their morions, wash'd with morning,
as they came.

And I that prated peace, when first
I heard
War-music, felt the blind wildbeast of
force,
Whose home is in the sinews of a
man,
Stir in me as to strike : then took the
king
His three broad sons ; with now a
wandering hand
And now a pointed finger, told them
all :
A common light of smiles at our dis-
guise
Broke from their lips, and, ere the
windy jest
Had labor'd down within his ample
lungs,
The genial giant, Arac, roll'd himself
Thrice in the saddle, then burst out in
words.

' Our land invaded, 'sdeath ! and he
himself
Your captive, yet my father wills not
war :

And, 'sdeath! myself, what care I,
 war or no?
 But then this question of your troth
 remains:
 And there's a downright honest mean-
 ing in her;
 She flies too high, she flies too high!
 and yet
 She ask'd but space and fairplay for
 her scheme;
 She prest and prest it on me—I my-
 self,
 What know I of these things? but,
 life and soul!
 I thought her half-right talking of her
 wrongs;
 I say she flies too high, 'sdeath! what
 of that?
 I take her for the flower of woman-
 kind,
 And so I often told her, right or
 wrong,
 And, Prince, she can be sweet to those
 she loves,
 And, right or wrong, I care not: this
 is all,
 I stand upon her side: she made me
 swear it—
 'Sdeath—and with solemn rites by
 candle-light—
 Swear by St. something—I forget her
 name—
 Her that talk'd down the fifty wisest
 men;
She was a princess too; and so I
 swore.
 Come, this is all; she will not: waive
 your claim:
 If not, the foughten field, what else,
 at once
 Decides it, 'sdeath! against my fath-
 er's will.'

I lagg'd in answer loth to render up
 My precontract, and loth by brainless
 war
 To cleave the rift of difference deeper
 yet;
 Till one of those two brothers, half
 aside
 And fingering at the hair about his lip,
 To prick us on to combat 'Like to
 like!

The woman's garment hid the wo-
 man's heart.'
 A taunt that clench'd his purpose like
 a blow!
 For fiery-short was Cyril's counter-
 scoff,
 And sharp I answer'd, touch'd upon
 the point
 Where idle boys are cowards to their
 shame,
 'Decide it here: why not? we are
 three to three.'

Then spake the third 'But three
 to three? no more?
 No more, and in our noble sister's
 cause?
 More, more, for honor: every cap-
 tain waits
 Hungry for honor, angry for his king.
 More, more, some fifty on a side, that
 each
 May breathe himself, and quick! by
 overthrow
 Of these or those, the question settled
 die.'

'Yea,' answer'd I, 'for this wild
 wreath of air,
 This flake of rainbow flying on the
 highest
 Foam of men's deeds—this honor, if
 ye will.
 'It needs must be for honor if at all:
 Since, what decision? if we fail, we
 fail,
 And if we win, we fail: she would not
 keep
 Her compact.' 'Sdeath! but we will
 send to her,'
 Said Arac, 'worthy reasons why she
 should
 Bide by this issue: let our missive
 thro',
 And you shall have her answer by the
 word.'

'Boys!' shriek'd the old king, but
 vainlier than a hen
 To her false daughters in the pool;
 for none
 Regarded; neither seem'd there more
 to say:



"MELISSA, WITH HER HAND UPON THE LOCK." THREE O.

Back rode we to my father's camp
and found
He thrice had sent a herald to the
gates,
To learn if Ida yet would cede our
claim,
Or by denial flush her babbling wells
With her own people's life: three
times he went:
The first, he blew and blew, but none
appear'd:
He batter'd at the doors; none came:
the next,
An awful voice within had warn'd him
thence:
The third, and those eight daughters
of the plough
Came sallying thro' the gates, and
caught his hair,
And so belabor'd him on rib and cheek
They made him wild: not less one
glance he caught
Thro' open doors of Ida station'd
there
Unshaken, clinging to her purpose,
firm
Tho' compass'd by two armies and
the noise
Of arms; and standing like a stately
Pine
Set in a cataract on an island-crag,
When storm is on the heights, and
right and left
Suck'd from the dark heart of the
long hills roll
The torrents, dash'd to the vale: and
yet her will
Bred will in me to overcome it or fall.

But when I told the king that I was
pledged
To fight in tourney for my bride, he
clash'd
His iron palms together with a cry;
Himself would tilt it out among the
lads:
But overborne by all his bearded lords
With reasons drawn from age and
state, perforce
He yielded, wroth and red, with fierce
demur:
And many a bold knight started up
in heat,

And sware to combat for my claim till
death.

All on this side the palace ran the
field
Flat to the garden-wall: and likewise
here,
Above the garden's glowing blossom-
belts,
A column'd entry shone and marble
stairs,
And great bronze valves, emboss'd
with Tomyris
And what she did to Cyrus after fight,
But now fast barr'd: so here upon the
flat
All that long morn the lists were
hammer'd up,
And all that morn the heralds to and
fro,
With message and defiance, went and
came;
Last, Ida's answer, in a royal hand,
But shaken here and there, and roll-
ing words
Oration-like. I kiss'd it and I read.

'O brother, you have known the
pangs we felt,
What heats of indignation when we
heard
Of those that iron-cramp'd their
women's feet;
Of lands in which at the altar the poor
bride
Gives her harsh groom for bridal-gift
a scourge;
Of living hearts that crack within the
fire
Where smoulder their dead despots;
and of those,—
Mothers,—that, all prophetic pity,
fling
Their pretty maids in the running
flood, and swoops
The vulture, beak and talon, at the
heart
Made for all noble motion: and I
saw
That equal baseness lived in sleeker
times
With smoother men: the old leaven
leaven'd all:

Millions of throats would bawl for
 civil rights,
 No woman named: therefore I set my
 face
 Against all men, and lived but for
 mine own.
 Far off from men I built a fold for
 them:
 I stored it full of rich memorial:
 I fenced it round with gallant insti-
 tutes,
 And biting laws to scare the beasts of
 prey
 And prosper'd; till a rout of saucy boys
 Brake on us at our books, and marr'd
 our peace,
 Mask'd like our maids, blustering I
 know not what
 Of insolence and love, some pretext
 held
 Of baby troth, invalid, since my will
 Seal'd not the bond—the striplings!—
 for their sport!—
 I tamed my leopards: shall I not
 tame these?
 Or you? or I? for since you think me
 touch'd
 In honor—what, I would not aught of
 false—
 Is not our cause pure? and whereas
 I know
 Your prowess, Arac, and what moth-
 er's blood
 You draw from, fight; you failing, I
 abide
 What end soever: fail you will not,
 Still
 Take not his life: he risk'd it for my
 own;
 His mother lives: yet whatsoe'er you
 do,
 Fight and fight well; strike and
 strike home. O dear
 Brothers, the woman's Angel guards
 you, you
 The sole men to be mingled with our
 cause,
 The sole men we shall prize in the
 after-time,
 Your very armor hallow'd, and your
 statues
 Rear'd, sung to, when, this gad-fly
 brush'd aside,

We plant a solid foot into the 'Time,
 And mould a generation strong to
 move
 With claim on claim from right to
 right, till she
 Whose name is yoked with children's,
 know herself;
 And Knowledge in our own land
 make her free,
 And, ever following those two crowned
 twins,
 Commerce and conquest, shower the
 fiery grain
 Of freedom broadcast over all that
 orbs
 Between the Northern and the South-
 ern morn.'

Then came a postscript dash'd
 across the rest.
 'See that there be no traitors in your
 camp:
 We seem a nest of traitors—none to
 trust
 Since our arms fail'd—this Egypt-
 plague of men!
 Almost our maids were better at
 their homes,
 Than thus man-girdled here: indeed
 I think
 Our chiefest comfort is the little child
 Of one unworthy mother; which she
 left:
 She shall not have it back: the child
 shall grow
 To prize the authentic mother of her
 mind.
 I took it for an hour in mine own bed
 This morning: there the tender or-
 phan hands
 Felt at my heart, and seem'd to charm
 from thence
 The wrath I nursed against the world:
 farewell.'

I ceased; he said, 'Stubborn, but
 she may sit
 Upon a king's right hand in thunder-
 storms,
 And breed up warriors! See now,
 tho' yourself
 Be dazzled by the wildfire Love to
 sloughs

That swallow common sense, the
spindling king,
This Gama swamp'd in lazy toler-
ance.

When the man wants weight, the
woman takes it up,
And topples down the scales; but
this is fixt

As are the roots of earth and base of
all;

Man for the field, and woman for the
hearth:

Man for the sword and for the needle
she:

Man with the head and woman with
the heart:

Man to command and woman to obey;
All else confusion. Look you! the
gray mare

Is ill to live with, when her whinny
shrills

From tile to scullery, and her small
goodman

Shrinks in his arm chair while the
fires of Hell

Mix with his hearth: but you—she's
yet a colt—

Take, break her: strongly groom'd
and straitly curb'd

She might not rank with those de-
testable

That let the bantling scald at home,
and brawl

Their rights or wrongs like potherbs
in the street.

They say she's comely; there's the
fairer chance:

I like her none the less for rating at
her!

Besides, the woman wed is not as we,
But suffers change of frame. A lusty
brace

Of twins may weed her of her folly.
Boy,

The bearing and the training of a
child

Is woman's wisdom.'

Thus the hard old king:
I took my leave, for it was nearly
noon:

I pored upon her letter which I held,
And on the little clause 'take not his
life:'

I mused on that wild morning in the
woods,
And on the 'Follow, follow, thou
shalt win:'

I thought on all the wrathful king had
said,

And how the strange betrothment
was to end:

Then I remember'd that burnt sor-
cerer's curse

That one should fight with shadows
and should fall;

And like a flash the weird affection
came:

King, camp and college turn'd to
hollow shows;

I seem'd to move in old memorial tilts,
And doing battle with forgotten
ghosts,

To dream myself the shadow of a
dream:

And ere I woke it was the point of
noon,

The lists were ready. Empanoplied
and plumed

We enter'd in, and waited, fifty there
Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet
blared

At the barrier like a wild horn in a land
Of echoes, and a moment, and once
more

The trumpet, and again: at which the
storm

Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge
of spears

And riders front to front, until they
closed

In conflict with the crash of shivering
points,

And thunder. Yet it seem'd a dream,
I dream'd

Of fighting. On his haunches rose
the steed,

And into fiery splinters leapt the
lance,

And out of stricken helmets sprang
the fire.

Part sat like rocks: part reel'd but
kept their seats:

Part roll'd on the earth and rose
again and drew:

Part stumbled mixt with flounder-
ing horses. Down

From those two bulks at Arac's side,
 and down
 From Arac's arm, as from a giant's
 flail,
 The large blows rain'd, as here and
 everywhere
 He rode the mellay, lord of the ring-
 ing lists,
 And all the plain,—brand, mace, and
 shaft, and shield—
 Shock'd, like an iron-clanging anvil
 bang'd
 With hammers; till I thought, can
 this be he
 From Gama's dwarfish loins? if this
 be so,
 The mother makes us most—and in
 my dream
 I glanced aside, and saw the palace-
 front
 Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies'
 eyes,
 And highest, among the statues,
 statuelike,
 Between a cymbal'd Miriam and a
 Jael,
 With Psyche's babe, was Ida watching
 us,
 A single band of gold about her hair,
 Like a Saint's glory up in heaven:
 but she
 No saint—inexorable—no tender-
 ness—
 Too hard, too cruel: yet she sees me
 fight,
 Yea, let her see me fall! with that I
 drave
 Among the thickest and bore down a
 Prince,
 And Cyril, one. Yea, let me make
 my dream
 All that I would. But that large-
 moulded man,
 His visage all agin as at a wake,
 Made at me thro' the press, and, stag-
 gering back
 With stroke on stroke the horse and
 horseman, came
 As comes a pillar of electric cloud,
 Flaying the roofs and sucking up the
 drains,
 And shadowing down the champaign
 till it strikes

On a wood, and takes, and breaks,
 and cracks, and splits,
 And twists the grain with such a roar
 that Earth
 Reels, and the herdsman cry; for
 everything
 Gave way before him: only Florian,
 he
 That loved me closer than his own
 right eye,
 Thrust in between; but Arac rode
 him down:
 And Cyril seeing it, push'd against
 the Prince,
 With Psyche's color round his helmet,
 tough,
 Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at
 arms;
 But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that
 smote
 And threw him: last I spurr'd; I felt
 my veins
 Stretch with fierce heat; a moment
 hand to hand,
 And sword to sword, and horse to
 horse we hung,
 Till I struck out and shouted; the
 blade glanced,
 I did but shear a feather, and dream
 and truth
 Flow'd from me; darkness closed
 me; and I fell.

VI.

Home they brought her warrior dead:
 She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry:
 All her maidens, watching, said,
 'She must weep or she will die.'
 Then they praised him, soft and low,
 Call'd him worthy to be loved,
 Truest friend and noblest foe;
 Yet she neither spoke nor moved.
 Stole a maiden from her place,
 Lightly to the warrior slept,
 Took the face-cloth from the face;
 Yet she neither moved nor wept.
 Rose a nurse of ninety years,
 Set his child upon her knee—
 Like a summer tempest came her tears—
 'Sweet my child, I live for thee.'

My dream had never died or lived again.

As in some mystic middle state I lay;
Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard:
Tho', if I saw not, yet they told me all
So often that I speak as having seen.

For so it seem'd, or so they said to me,
That all things grew more tragic and more strange;
That when our side was vanquish'd and my cause
For ever lost, there went up a great cry,
The Prince is slain. My father heard and ran
In on the lists, and there unlaced my casque
And grovell'd on my body, and after him
Came Psyche, sorrowing for Aglaia.

But high upon the palace Ida stood
With Psyche's babe in arm: there on the roofs
Like that great dame of Lapidoth she sang.

'Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: the seed,
The little seed they laugh'd at in the dark,
Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a bulk
Of spanless girth, that lays on every side
A thousand arms and rushes to the Sun.

'Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: they came;
The leaves were wet with women's tears: they heard
A noise of songs they would not understand:
They mark'd it with the red cross to the fall,
And would have strown it, and are fall'n themselves.

'Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: they came,
The woodmen with their axes: lo the tree!
But we will make it faggots for the hearth,
And shape it plank and beam for roof and floor,
And boats and bridges for the use of men.

'Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: they struck;
With their own blows they hurt themselves, nor knew
There dwelt an iron nature in the grain:
The glittering axe was broken in their arms,
Their arms were shatter'd to the shoulder blade.

'Our enemies have fall'n, but this shall grow
A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth
Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power: and roll'd
With music in the growing breeze of Time,
The tops shall strike from star to star, the fangs
Shall move the stony bases of the world.

'And now, O maids, behold our sanctuary
Is violate, our laws broken: fear we not
To break them more in their behoof, whose arms
Champion'd our cause and won it with a day
Blanch'd in our annals, and perpetual feast,
When dames and heroines of the golden year
Shall strip a hundred hollows bare of Spring,
To rain an April of ovation round
Their statues, borne aloft, the three: but come,
We will be liberal, since our rights are won.
Let them not lie in the tents with coarse mankind,
Ill nurses; but descend, and proffer these
The brethren of our blood and cause, that there
Lie bruised and maim'd, the tender ministries
Of female hands and hospitality.'

She spoke, and with the babe yet in her arms,
Descending, burst the great bronze valves, and led

A hundred maids in train across the
 Park.
 Some cowl'd and some bare-headed,
 on they came,
 Their feet in flowers, her loveliest : by
 them went
 The enamor'd air sighing, and on
 their curls
 From the high tree the blossom wav-
 ering fell,
 And over them the tremulous isles of
 light
 Slided, they moving under shade :
 but Blanche
 At distance follow'd : so they came :
 anon
 Thro' open field into the lists they
 wound
 Timorously ; and as the leader of the
 herd
 That holds a stately fretwork to the
 Sun,
 And follow'd up by a hundred airy
 does,
 Steps with a tender foot, light as on
 air,
 The lovely, lordly creature floated on
 To where her wounded brethren lay ;
 there stay'd ;
 Knelt on one knee,—the child on one,
 —and prest
 Their hands, and call'd them dear de-
 liverers,
 And happy warriors, and immortal
 names,
 And said ' You shall not lie in the
 tents but here,
 And nursed by those for whom you
 fought, and served
 With female hands and hospitality.'

Then, whether moved by this, or
 was it chance,
 She past my way. Up started from
 my side
 The old lion, glaring with his whelp-
 less eye,
 Silent ; but when she saw me lying
 stark,
 Dishelm'd and mute, and motionlessly
 pale,
 Cold ev'n to her, she sigh'd ; and
 when she saw

The haggard father's face and rever-
 end beard
 Of grisly twine, all dabbled with the
 blood
 Of his own son, shudder'd, a twitch of
 pain
 Tortured her mouth, and o'er her fore-
 head past
 A shadow, and her hue changed, and
 she said :
 ' He saved my life : my brother slew
 him for it.'
 No more ; at which the king in bitter
 scorn
 Drew from my neck the painting and
 the tress,
 And held them up : she saw them,
 and a day
 Rose from the distance on her mem-
 ory,
 When the good Queen, her mother,
 shore the tress
 With kisses, ere the days of Lady
 Blanche :
 And then once more she look'd at
 my pale face :
 Till understanding all the foolish
 work
 Of Fancy, and the bitter close of all,
 Her iron will was broken in her mind ;
 Her noble heart was molten in her
 breast ;
 She bow'd, she set the child on the
 earth ; she laid
 A feeling finger on my brows, and
 presently
 ' O Sire,' she said, ' he lives : he is not
 dead :
 O let me have him with my brethren
 here
 In our own palace : we will tend on
 him
 Like one of these ; if so, by any
 means,
 To lighten this great clog of thanks,
 that make
 Our progress falter to the woman's
 goal.'

She said : but at the happy word
 ' he lives '
 My father stoop'd, re-father'd o'er my
 wounds.

So those two foes above my fallen
life,
With brow to brow like night and
evening mixt
Their dark and gray, while Psyche
ever stole
A little nearer, till the babe that by
us,
Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden
brede,
Lay like a new-fall'n meteor on the
grass,
Uncared for, spied its mother and
began
A blind and babbling laughter, and to
dance
Its body, and reach its fatling innocent
arms
And lazy lingering fingers. She the
appeal
Brook'd not, but clamoring out 'Mine
—mine—not yours,
It is not yours, but mine : give me the
child'
Ceased all on tremble: piteous was
the cry:
So stood the unhappy mother open-
mouth'd,
And turn'd each face her way: wan
was her cheek
With hollow watch, her blooming
mantle torn,
Red grief and mother's hunger in her
eye,
And down dead-heavy sank her curls,
and half
The sacred mother's bosom, panting,
burst
The laces toward her babe; but she
nor cared
Nor knew it, clamoring on, till Ida
heard,
Look'd up, and rising slowly from me,
stood
Erect and silent, striking with her
glance
The mother, me, the child; but he that
lay
Beside us, Cyril, batter'd as he was,
Trail'd himself up on one knee: then
he drew
Her robe to meet his lips, and down
she look'd

At the arm'd man sideways, pitying as
it seem'd,
Or self-involved; but when she learnt
his face,
Remembering his ill-omen'd song,
arose
Once more thro' all her height, and
o'er him grew
Tall as a figure lengthen'd on the sand
When the tide ebbs in sunshine, and
he said:

'O fair and strong and terrible!
Lioness
That with your long locks play the
Lion's mane!
But Love and Nature, these are two
more terrible
And stronger. See, your foot is on
our necks,
We vanquish'd, you the Victor of your
will.
What would you more? give her the
child! remain
Orb'd in your isolation: he is dead,
Or all as dead: henceforth we let you
be:
Win you the hearts of women; and
beware
Lest, where you seek the common
love of these,
The common hate with the revolving
wheel
Should drag you down, and some
great Nemesis
Break from a darken'd future, crown'd
with fire,
And tread you out for ever: but how-
soe'er
Fix'd in yourself, never in your own
arms
To hold your own, deny not hers to
her,
Give her the child! O if, I say, you
keep
One pulse that beats true woman, if
you loved
The breast that fed or arm that dan-
dled you,
Or own one port of sense not flint to
prayer,
Give her the child! or if you scorn to
lay it,

Yourself, in hands so lately claspt
 with yours,
 Or speak to her, your dearest, her one
 fault
 The tenderness, not yours, that could
 not kill,
 Give *me* it: *I* will give it her.'

He said:

At first her eye with slow dilation
 roll'd
 Dry flame, she listening: after sank
 and sank
 And, into mournful twilight mellow-
 ing, dwelt
 Full on the child; she took it:
 'Pretty bud!
 Lily of the vale! half open'd bell of
 the woods!
 Sole comfort of my dark hour, when
 a world
 Of traitorous friend and broken sys-
 tem made
 No purple in the distance, mystery,
 Pledge of a love not to be mine,
 farewell;
 These men are hard upon us as of
 old,
 We two must part; and yet how fain
 was I
 To dream thy cause embraced in mine,
 to think
 I might be something to thee, when I
 felt
 Thy helpless warmth about my barren
 breast
 In the dead prime: but may thy
 mother prove
 As true to thee as false, false, false to
 me!
 And, if thou needs must bear the
 yoke, I wish it
 Gentle as freedom'—here she kiss'd
 it: then—
 'All good go with thee! take it Sir,'
 and so
 Laid the soft babe in his hard-mailed
 hands,
 Who turn'd half-round to Psyche as
 she sprang
 To meet it, with an eye that swum in
 thanks;
 Then felt it sound and whole from
 head to foot,

And hugg'd and never hugg'd it close
 enough,
 And in her hunger mouth'd and
 mumbled it,
 And hid her bosom with it; after that
 Put on more calm and added suppli-
 antly:

'We two were friends: I go to
 mine own land
 For ever: find some other: as for me
 I scarce am fit for your great plans:
 yet speak to me,
 Say one soft word and let me part
 forgiven.'

But Ida spoke not, rapt upon the
 child.
 Then Arac. 'Ida—'sdeath! you
 blame the man;
 You wrong yourselves—the woman is
 so hard
 Upon the woman. Come, a grace to
 me!
 I am your warrior: I and mine have
 fought
 Your battle: kiss her; take her hand,
 she weeps
 'Sdeath! I would sooner fight thrice
 o'er than see it.'

But Ida spoke not, gazing on the
 ground,
 And reddening in the furrows of his
 chin,
 And moved beyond his custom,
 Gama said:

'I've heard that there is iron in the
 blood,
 And I believe it. Not one word? not
 one?
 Whence drew you this steel temper?
 not from me,
 Not from your mother, now a saint
 with saints.
 She said you had a heart—I heard
 her say it—
 "Our Ida has a heart"—just ere she
 died—
 "But see that some one with authority
 Be near her still" and I—I sought
 for one—

All people said she had authority—
 The Lady Blanche: much profit!
 Not one word;
 No! tho' your father sues: see how
 you stand
 Stiff as Lot's wife, and all the good
 knights maim'd,
 I trust that there is no one hurt to
 death,
 Fr your wild whim: and was it then
 for this,
 Was it for this we gave our palace
 up,
 Where we withdrew from summer
 heats and state,
 And had our wine and chess beneath
 the planes,
 And many a pleasant hour with her
 that's gone,
 Ere you were born to vex us? Is it
 kind?
 Speak to her I say: is this not she of
 whom,
 When first she came, all flush'd you
 said to me
 Now had you got a friend of your own
 age,
 Now could you share your thought:
 now should men see
 Two women faster welded in one love
 Than pairs of wedlock; she you
 walk'd with, she
 You talk'd with, whole nights long,
 up in the tower,
 Of sine and arc, spheroid and azi-
 muth,
 And right ascension, Heaven knows
 what; and now
 A word, but one, one little kindly
 word,
 Not one to spare her: out upon you,
 flint!
 You love nor her, nor me, nor any;
 nay,
 You shame your mother's judgment
 too. Not one?
 You will not? well—no heart have
 you, or such
 As fancies like the vermin in a nut
 Have fretted all to dust and bitter-
 ness.'
 So said the small king moved beyond
 his wont.

But Ida stood nor spoke, drain'd of
 her force
 By many a varying influence and so
 long.
 Down thro' her limbs a drooping
 languor wept:
 Her head a little bent; and on her
 mouth
 A doubtful smile dwelt like a clouded
 moon
 In a still water: then brake out my
 sire,
 Lifting his grim head from my
 wounds. 'O you,
 Woman, whom we thought woman
 even now,
 And were half fool'd to let you tend
 our son,
 Because he might have wish'd it—but
 we see
 The accomplice of your madness
 unforgiven,
 And think that you might mix his
 draught with death,
 When your skies change again: the
 rougher hand
 Is safer: on to the tents: take up the
 Prince.'

He rose, and while each ear was
 prick'd to attend
 A tempest, thro' the cloud that
 dimm'd her broke
 A genial warmth and light once more,
 and shone
 Thro' glittering drops on her sad
 friend.

'Come hither.
 O Psyche,' she cried out, 'embrace
 me, come,
 Quick while I melt; make reconcile-
 ment sure
 With one that cannot keep her mind
 an hour:
 Come to the hollow heart they
 slander so!
 Kiss and be friends, like children
 being chid!
 I seem no more: I want forgiveness
 too:
 I should have had to do with none
 but maids,

That have no links with men. Ah
false but dear,
Dear traitor, too much loved, why?—
why?—Yet see,
Before these kings we embrace you
yet once more
With all forgiveness, all oblivion,
And trust, not love, you less.

And now, O sire,
Grant me your son, to nurse, to wait
upon him,
Like mine own brother. For my debt
to him,

This nightmare weight of gratitude, I
know it ;

Taunt me no more : yourself and yours
shall have

Free adit ; we will scatter all our maids
Till happier times each to her proper
hearth :

What use to keep them here—now ?
grant my prayer.

Help, father, brother, help ; speak to
the king :

Thaw this male nature to some touch
of that

Which kills me with myself, and drags
me down

From my fixt height to mob me up
with all

The soft and milky rabble of woman-
kind,

Poor weakling ev'n as they are.'

Passionate tears
Follow'd : the king replied not : Cyril
said :

'Your brother, Lady,—Florian,—ask
for him

Of your great head—for he is wounded
too—

That you may tend upon him with the
prince.³

'Ay so,' said Ida with a bitter smile,
'Our laws are broken : let him enter
too.'

Then Violet, she that sang the mourn-
ful song,

And had a cousin tumbled on the plain,
Petition'd too for him. 'Ay so,' she
said,

'I stagger in the stream : I cannot keep
My heart an eddy from the brawling
hour :

We break our laws with ease, but let
it be.'

'Ay so?' said Blanche : 'Amazed am
I to hear

Your Highness : but your. Highness
breaks with ease

The law your Highness did not make :
'twas I.

I had been wedded wife, I knew man-
kind,

And block'd them out ; but these men
came to woo

Your Highness—verily I think to win.'

So she, and turn'd askance a wintry
eye :

But Ida with a voice, that like a bell
Toll'd by an earthquake in a trembling

tower,
Rang ruin, answer'd full of grief and
scorn.

'Fling our doors wide ! all, all, not
one, but all,

Not only he, but by my mother's soul,
Whatever man lies wounded, friend or
foe,

Shall enter, if he will. Let our girls
flit,

Till the storm die ! but had you stood
by us,

The roar that breaks the Pharos from
his base

Had left us rock. She fain would
sting us too,

But shall not. Pass, and mingle with
your likes.

We brook no further insult but are
gone.'

She turn'd ; the very nape of her
white neck

Was rosed with indignation : but the
Prince

Her brother came ; the king her father
charm'd

Her wounded soul with words : nor
did mine own

Refuse her proffer, lastly gave his
hand.

Then us they lifted up, dead weights,
and bare

Straight to the doors: to them the
 doors gave way
 Groaning, and in the Vestal entry
 shriek'd
 The virgin marble under iron heels :
 And on they moved and gain'd the hall,
 and there
 Rested : but great the crush was, and
 each base,
 To left and right, of those tall columns
 drown'd
 In silken fluctuation and the swarm
 Of female whisperers : at the further
 end
 Was Ida by the throne, the two great
 cats
 Close by her, like supporters on a
 shield,
 Bow-back'd with fear: but in the
 centre stood
 The common men with rolling eyes;
 amazed
 They glared upon the women, and
 aghast
 The women stared at these, all silent,
 save
 When armor clash'd or jingled, while
 the day,
 Descending, struck athwart the hall,
 and shot
 A flying splendor out of brass and steel,
 That o'er the statues leapt from head
 to head,
 Now fired an angry Pallas on the
 helm,
 Now set a wrathful Dian's moon on
 flame,
 And now and then an echo started up,
 And shuddering fled from room to
 room, and died
 Of fright in far apartments.
 Then the voice
 Of Ida sounded, issuing ordinance :
 And me they bore up the broad stairs,
 and thro'
 The long-laid galleries past a hundred
 doors
 To one deep chamber shut from sound,
 and due
 To languid limbs and sickness; left
 me in it;
 And others elsewhere they laid; and
 all

That afternoon a sound arose of hoof
 And chariot, many a maiden passing
 home
 Till happier times; but some were left
 of those
 Held sagest, and the great lords out
 and in,
 From those two hosts that lay beside
 the walls,
 Walk'd at their will, and everything
 was changed.

VII.

Ask me no more : the moon may draw the
 sea ;
 The cloud may stoop from heaven and
 take the shape
 With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape;
 But O too fond, when have I answer'd
 thee ?

Ask me no more.

Ask me no more : what answer should I
 give ?
 I love not hollow cheek or faded eye:
 Yet O my friend, I will not have thee
 die !

Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee
 live ;

Ask me no more.

Ask me no more : thy fate and mine are
 seal'd:
 I strove against the stream and all in
 vain:

Let the great river take me to the main:
 No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield ;
 Ask me no more.

So was their sanctuary violated,
 So their fair college turn'd to hospital;
 At first with all confusion: by and by
 Sweet order lived again with other
 laws:
 A kindlier influence reign'd; and
 everywhere
 Low voices with the ministering hand
 Hung round the sick: the maidens
 came, they talk'd,
 They sang, they read: till she not fair
 began
 To gather light, and she that was,
 became

Her former beauty treble ; and to and
fro
With books, with flowers, with Angel
offices,
Like creatures native unto gracious
act,
And in their own clear element, they
moved.

But sadness on the soul of Ida fell,
And hatred of her weakness, blent
with shame.
Old studies fail'd ; seldom she spoke :
but oft
Clomb to the roofs, and gazed alone
for hours
On that disastrous leaguer, swarms of
men
Darkening her female field : void was
her use,
And she as one that climbs a peak to
gaze
O'er land and main, and sees a great
black cloud
Drag inward from the deeps, a wall of
night,
Blot out the slope of sea from verge
to shore
And suck the blinding splendor from
the sand,
And quenching lake by lake and tarn
by tarn
Expunge the world : so fared she gaz-
ing there ;
So blacken'd all her world in secret,
blank
And waste it seem'd and vain ; till
down she came,
And found fair peace once more
among the sick.

And twilight dawn'd ; and morn by
morn the lark
Shot up and shrill'd in flickering gyres,
but I
Lay silent in the muffled cage of life :
And twilight gloom'd ; and broader-
grown the bowers
Drew the great night into themselves,
and Heaven,
Star after star, arose and fell ; but I,
Deeper than those weird doubts could
reach me, lay

Quite sunder'd from the moving Uni-
verse,
Nor knew what eye was on me, nor
the hand
That nursed me, more than infants in
their sleep.

But Psyche tended Florian : with
her oft,
Melissa came ; for Blanche had gone,
but left
Her child among us, willing she
should keep
Court-favor : here and there the
small bright head,
A light of healing, glanced about the
couch,
Or thro' the parted silks the tender
face
Peep'd, shining in upon the wounded
man
With blush and smile, a medicine in
themselves
To wile the length from languorous
hours, and draw
The sting from pain ; nor seem'd it
strange that soon
He rose up whole, and those fair
charities
Join'd at her side ; nor stranger
seem'd that hearts
So gentle, so employ'd, should close
in love,
Than when two dewdrops on the petal
shake
To the same sweet air, and tremble
deeper down,
And slip at once all-fragrant into one.

Less prosperously the second suit
obtain'd
At first with Psyche. Not tho'
Blanche had sworn
That after that dark night among the
fields
She needs must wed him for her own
good name ;
Not tho' he built upon the babe re-
stored ;
Nor tho' she liked him, yielded she,
but fear'd
To incense the Head once more ; till
on a day

When Cyril pleaded, Ida came behind
Seen but of Psyche : on her foot she
hung
A moment, and she heard, at which
her face
A little flush'd, and she past on ; but
each
Assumed from thence a half-consent
involved
In stillness, plighted troth, and were
at peace.

Nor only these : Love in the sacred
halls
Held carnival at will, and flying struck
With showers of random sweet on
maid and man.
Nor did her father cease to press my
claim,
Nor did mine own now reconciled ;
nor yet
Did those twin brothers, risen again
and whole ;
Nor Arac, satiate with his victory.

But I lay still, and with me oft she
sat :
Then came a change ; for sometimes
I would catch
Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it
hard,
And fling it like a viper off, and
shriek
' You are not Ida ; ' clasp it once again,
And call her Ida, tho' I knew her not,
And call her sweet, as if in irony,
And call her hard and cold which
seem'd a truth :
And still she fear'd that I should lose
my mind,
And often she believed that I should
die :
Till out of long frustration of her care,
And pensive tendance in the all-
weary noons,
And watches in the dead, the dark,
when clocks
Throbb'd thunder thro' the palace
floors, or call'd
On flying Time from all their silver
tongues—
And out of memories of her kindlier
days,

And sidelong glances at my father's
grief,
And at the happy lovers heart in
heart—
And out of hauntings of my spoken
love,
And lonely listenings to my mutter'd
dream,
And often feeling of the helpless
hands,
And wordless broodings on the wasted
cheek—
From all a closer interest flourish'd up,
Tenderness touch by touch, and last,
to these,
Love, like an Alpine harebell hung
with tears
By some cold morning glacier ; frail
at first
And feeble, all unconscious of itself,
But such as gather'd color day by day.

Last I woke sane, but well-nigh
close to death
For weakness : it was evening : silent
light
Slept on the painted walls, wherein
were wrought
Two grand designs ; for on one side
arose
The women up in wild revolt, and
storm'd
At the Oppian law. Titanic shapes,
they cramm'd
The forum, and half-crush'd among
the rest
A dwarf-like Cato cower'd. On the
other side
Hortensia spoke against the tax ;
behind,
A train of dames : by axe and eagle
sat,
With all their foreheads drawn in
Roman scowls,
And half the wolf's-milk curdled in
their veins,
The fierce triumvirs ; and before them
paused
Hortensia pleading : angry was her
face.

I saw the forms : I knew not where
I was :

They did but look like hollow shows ;
 nor more
 Sweet Ida : palm to palm she sat : the
 dew
 Dwelt in her eyes, and softer all her
 shape
 And rounder seem'd : I moved : I
 sigh'd : a touch
 Came round my wrist, and tears upon
 my hand :
 Then all for languor and self-pity ran
 Mine down my face, and with what
 life I had,
 And like a flower that cannot all
 unfold,
 So drench'd it is with tempest, to the
 sun,
 Yet, as it may, turns toward him, I on
 her
 Fixt my faint eyes, and utter'd whis-
 peringly :

‘If you be, what I think you, some
 sweet dream,
 I would but ask you to fulfil yourself :
 But if you be that Ida whom I knew,
 I ask you nothing : only, if a dream,
 Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die
 to-night.
 Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere
 I die.’

I could no more, but lay like one in
 trance,
 That hears his burial talk'd of by his
 friends,
 And cannot speak, nor move, nor
 make one sign,
 But lies and dreads his doom. She
 turn'd ; she paused ;
 She stoop'd ; and out of languor leapt
 a cry ;
 Leapt fiery Passion from the brinks of
 death ;
 And I believed that in the living
 world
 My spirit closed with Ida's at the lips ;
 Till back I fell, and from mine arms
 she rose
 Glowing all over noble shame ; and
 all
 Her falsèr self slipt from her like a
 robe,

And left her woman, lovelier in her
 mood
 Than in her mould that other, when
 she came
 From barren deeps to conquer all
 with love ;
 And down the streaming crystal dropt ;
 and she
 Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,
 Naked, a double light in air and wave,
 To meet her Graces, where they
 deck'd her out
 For worship without end ; nor end of
 mine,
 Stateliest, for thee ! but mute she
 glided forth,
 Nor glanced behind her, and I sank
 and slept,
 Fill'd thro' and thro' with Love, a
 happy sleep.

Deep in the night I woke : she,
 near me, held
 A volume of the Poets of her land :
 There to herself, all in low tones, she
 read.

‘Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the
 white ;
 Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk ;
 Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry
 font ;
 The fire-fly wakens : waken thou with me.

Now droops the milkwhite peacock like
 a ghost,
 And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,
 And all thy heart lies open unto me.

Now slides the silent meteor on, and
 leaves
 A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
 And slips into the bosom of the lake :
 So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
 Into my bosom and be lost in me.’

I heard her turn the page ; she
 found a small
 Sweet Idyl, and once more, as low, she
 read :

'Come down, O maid, from yonder
mountain height:
What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd
sang)
In height and cold, the splendor of the
hills?
But cease to move so near the Heavens,
and cease
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted Pine,
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,
For Love is of the valley, come thou down
And find him; by the happy threshold, he,
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,
Or red with spirted purple of the vats,
Or foxlike in the vine; nor cares to walk
With Death and Morning on the silver
horns,
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven
falls
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors:
But follow; let the torrent dance thee
down
To find him in the valley; let the wild
Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and leave
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and
spill
Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-
smoke,
That like a broken purpose waste in air:
So waste not thou; but come; for all the
vales
Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth
Arise to thee; the children call, and I
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every
sound,
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is
sweet;
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the
lawn,
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees.'

So she low-toned; while with shut
eyes I lay
Listening; then look'd. Pale was
the perfect face;
The bosom with long sighs labor'd;
and meek
Seem'd the full lips, and mild the lu-
minous eyes,

And the voice trembled and the hand.
She said
Brokenly, that she knew it, she had
fail'd
In sweet humility; had fail'd in all;
That all her labor was but as a
block
Left in the quarry; but she still were
loth,
She still were loth to yield herself to
one
That wholly scorn'd to help their
equal rights
Against the sons of men, and barbar-
ous laws.
She pray'd me not to judge their
cause from her
That wrong'd it, sought far less for
truth than power
In knowledge: something wild within
her breast,
A greater than all knowledge, beat
her down.
And she had nursed me there from
week to week:
Much had she learnt in little time.
In part
It was ill counsel had misled the girl
To vex true hearts: yet was she but a
girl—
'Ah fool, and made myself a Queen of
farce!
When comes another such? never, I
think,
Till the Sun drop, dead, from the
signs.'

Her voice
Choked, and her forehead sank upon
her hands,
And her great heart thro' all the
faultful Past
Went sorrowing in a pause I dared
not break;
Till notice of a change in the dark
world
Was lispt about the acacias, and a
bird,
That early woke to feed her little
ones,
Sent from a dewy breast a cry for
light:
She moved, and at her feet the vol-
ume fell.

'Blame not thyself too much,' I
 said, 'nor blame
 Too much the sons of men and bar-
 barous laws;
 These were the rough ways of the
 world till now.
 Henceforth thou hast a helper, me,
 that know
 The woman's cause is man's: they
 rise or sink
 Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or
 free:
 For she that out of Lethe scales with
 man
 The shining steps of Nature, shares
 with man
 His nights, his days, moves with him
 to one goal,
 Stays all the fair young planet in her
 hands—
 If she be small, slight-natured, miser-
 able,
 How shall men grow? but work no
 more alone!
 Our place is much: as far as in us
 lies
 We two will serve them both in aid-
 ing her—
 Will clear away the parasitic forms
 That seem to keep her up but drag
 her down—
 Will leave her space to burgeon out
 of all
 Within her—let her make herself her
 own
 To give or keep, to live and learn and
 be
 All that not harms distinctive woman-
 hood.
 For woman is not undevelop't man,
 But diverse: could we make her as
 the man,
 Sweet Love were slain: his dearest
 bond is this,
 Not like to like, but like in difference.
 Yet in the long years liker must they
 grow;
 The man be more of woman, she of
 man;
 He gain in sweetness and in moral
 height,
 Nor lose the wrestling thews that
 throw the world;

She mental breadth, nor fail in child-
 ward care,
 Nor lose the childlike in the larger
 mind;
 Till at the last she set herself to man,
 Like perfect music unto noble words;
 And so these twain, upon the skirts
 of Time,
 Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all
 their powers,
 Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,
 Self-reverent each and reverencing
 each,
 Distinct in individualities,
 But like each other ev'n as those who
 love.
 Then comes the statelier Eden back
 to men:
 Then reign the world's great bridals,
 chaste and calm:
 Then springs the crowning race of
 humankind.
 May these things be!'

Sighing she spoke 'I fear
 They will not.'
 'Dear, but let us type them now
 In our own lives, and this proud
 watchword rest
 Of equal; seeing either sex alone
 Is half itself, and in true marriage lies
 Nor equal, nor unequal: each fulfils
 Defect in each, and always thought in
 thought,
 Purpose in purpose, will in will, they
 grow,
 The single pure and perfect animal,
 The two-cell'd heart beating, with one
 full stroke,
 Life.'

And again sighing she spoke: 'A
 dream
 That once was mine! what woman
 taught you this?'

'Alone,' I said, 'from earlier than I
 know,
 Immersed in rich foreshadowings of
 the world,
 I loved the woman: he, that doth not,
 lives
 A drowning life, besotted in sweet self,
 Or pines in sad experience worse than
 death,

Or keeps his wing'd affections clipt
with crime :

Yet was there one thro' whom I
loved her, one

Not learned, save in gracious house-
hold ways,

Not perfect, nay, but full of tender
wants,

No Angel, but a dearer being, all dipt
In Angel instincts, breathing Para-
dise,

Interpreter between the Gods and
men,

Who look'd all native to her place,
and yet

On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a
sphere

Too gross to tread, and all male
minds perforce

Sway'd to her from their orbits as
they moved,

And girdled her with music. Happy he
With such a mother ! faith in woman-
kind

Beats with his blood, and trust in all
things high

Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip
and fall

He shall not blind his soul with clay.'

'But I,'
Said Ida, tremulously, 'so all unlike—
It seems you love to cheat yourself
with words :

This mother is your model. I have
heard

Of your strange doubts: they well
might be: I seem

A mockery to my own self. Never,
Prince;

You cannot love me.'

'Nay but thee' I said
'From yearlong poring on thy
pictured eyes,

Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen,
and saw

Thee woman thro' the crust of iron
moods

That mask'd thee from men's rever-
ence up, and forced

Sweet love on pranks of saucy boy-
hood: now,

Giv'n back to life, to life indeed, thro'
thee,

Indeed I love: the new day comes,
the light

Dearer for night, as dearer thou for
faults

Lived over: lift thine eyes; my
doubts are dead,

My haunting sense of hollow shows:
the change,

This truthful change in thee has kill'd
it. Dear,

Look up, and let thy nature strike on
mine,

Like yonder morning on the blind
half-world;

Approach and fear not; breathe upon
my brows;

In that fine air I tremble, all the past
Melts mist-like into this bright hour,
and this

Is morn to more, and all the rich to-
come

Reels, as the golden Autumn wood-
land reels

Athwart the smoke of burning weeds.
Forgive me,

I waste my heart in signs: let be.
My bride,

My wife, my life. O we will walk
this world,

Yoked in all exercise of noble end,
And so thro' those dark gates across
the wild

That no man knows. Indeed I love
thee: come,

Yield thyself up: my hopes and thine
are one:

Accomplish thou my manhood and
thyself;

Lay thy sweet hands in mine and
trust to me.'

CONCLUSION.

So closed our tale, of which I give
you all

The random scheme as wildly as it
rose:

The words are mostly mine; for
when we ceased

There came a minute's pause, and
Walter said,

'I wish she had not yielded!' then to
me,

'What, if you drest it up poetically!'
 So pray'd the men, the women: I
 gave assent:
 Yet how to bind the scatter'd scheme
 of seven
 Together in one sheaf? What style
 could suit?
 The men required that I should give
 throughout
 The sort of mock-heroic gigantesque,
 With which we banter'd little Lilia
 first:
 The women—and perhaps they felt
 their power,
 For something in the ballads which
 they sang,
 Or in their silent influence as they sat,
 Had ever seem'd to wrestle with
 burlesque,
 And drove us, last, to quite a solemn
 close—
 They hated banter, wish'd for some-
 thing real,
 A gallant fight, a noble princess—
 why
 Not make her true-heroic—true-
 sublime?
 Or all, they said, as earnest as the
 close?
 Which yet with such a framework
 scarce could be.
 Then rose a little feud betwixt the
 two,
 Betwixt the mockers and the realists:
 And I, betwixt them both, to please
 them both,
 And yet to give the story as it rose,
 I moved as in a strange diagonal,
 And maybe neither pleased myself
 nor them.

But Lilia pleased me, for she took
 no part
 In our dispute: the sequel of the
 tale
 Had touch'd her; and she sat, she
 pluck'd the grass,
 She flung it from her, thinking: last,
 she fixt
 A showery glance upon her aunt, and
 said,
 'You—tell us what we are' who
 might have told,

For she was cramm'd with theories
 out of books,
 But that there rose a shout: the gates
 were closed
 At sunset, and the crowd were swarm-
 ing now,
 To take their leave, about the garden
 rails.

So I and some went out to these:
 we climb'd
 The slope to Vivian-place, and turn-
 ing saw
 The happy valleys, half in light, and
 half
 Far-shadowing from the west, a land
 of peace;
 Gray halls alone among their massive
 groves;
 Trim hamlets; here and there a rustic
 tower
 Half-lost in belts of hop and breadths
 of wheat;
 The shimmering glimpses of a stream;
 the seas;
 A red sail, or a white; and far beyond,
 Imagined more than seen, the skirts
 of France.

'Look there, a garden!' said my
 college friend,
 The Tory member's elder son, 'and
 there!
 God bless the narrow sea which keeps
 her off,
 And keeps our Britain, whole within
 herself,
 A nation yet, the rulers and the
 ruled—
 Some sense of duty, something of a
 faith,
 Some reverence for the laws our-
 selves have made,
 Some patient force to change them
 when we will,
 Some civic manhood firm against the
 crowd—
 But yonder, whiff! there comes a
 sudden heat,
 The gravest citizen seems to lose his
 head,
 The king is scared, the soldier will
 not fight,

The little boys begin to shoot and stab,
A kingdom topples over with a shriek
Like an old woman, and down rolls the world
In mock heroics stranger than our own;
Revolts, republics, revolutions, most
No graver than a schoolboys' barring out;
Too comic for the solemn things they are,
Too solemn for the comic touches in them,
Like our wild Princess with as wise a dream
As some of theirs—God bless the narrow seas!
I wish they were a whole Atlantic broad.'

'Have patience,' I replied, 'ourselves are full
Of social wrong; and maybe wildest dreams
Are but the needful preludes of the truth:
For me, the genial day, the happy crowd,
The sport half-science, fill me with a faith,
This fine old world of ours is but a child
Yet in the go-cart. Patience! Give it time
To learn its limbs: there is a hand that guides.'

In such discourse we gain'd the garden rails,
And there we saw Sir Walter where he stood,
Before a tower of crimson holly-oaks,
Among six boys, head under head, and look'd
No little lily-handed Baronet he,
A great broad-shoulder'd genial Englishman,
A lord of fat prize-oxen and of sheep,
A raiser of huge melons and of pine,
A patron of some thirty charities,
A pamphleteer on guano and on grain,

A quarter-sessions chairman, abler none;
Fair-hair'd and redder than a windy morn;
Now shaking hands with him, now him, of those
That stood the nearest—now address'd to speech—
Who spoke few words and pithy, such as closed
Welcome, farewell, and welcome for the year
To follow: a shout rose again, and made
The long line of the approaching rookery swerve
From the elms, and shook the branches of the deer
From slope to slope thro' distant ferns, and rang
Beyond the bourn of sunset; O, a shout
More joyful than the city-roar that hails
Premier or king! Why should not these great Sirs
Give up their parks some dozen times a year
To let the people breathe? So thrice they cried,
I likewise, and in groups they stream'd away.

But we went back to the Abbey, and sat on,
So much the gathering darkness charm'd: we sat
But spoke not, rapt in nameless reverie,
Perchance upon the future man: the walls
Blacken'd about us, bats wheel'd, and owls whoop'd,
And gradually the powers of the night,
That range above the region of the wind,
Deepening the courts of twilight broke them up
Thro' all the silent spaces of the worlds,
Beyond all thought into the Heaven of Heavens.

Last little Lilia, rising quietly,
Disrobed the glimmering statue of
Sir Ralph
From those rich silks, and home well-
pleased we went.

ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

PUBLISHED IN 1852.

I.

BURY the Great Duke
With an empire's lamentation,
Let us bury the Great Duke
To the noise of the mourning of a
mighty nation,
Mourning when their leaders fall,
Warriors carry the warrior's pall,
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

II.

Where shall we lay the man whom
we deplore?
Here, in streaming London's central
roar.
Let the sound of those he wrought
for,
And the feet of those he fought for,
Echo round his bones for evermore.

III.

Lead out the pageant: sad and slow,
As fits an universal woe,
Let the long long procession go,
And let the sorrowing crowd about it
grow,
And let the mournful martial music
blow;
The last great Englishman is low.

IV.

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,
Remembering all his greatness in the
Past.
No more in soldier fashion will he
greet
With lifted hand the gazer in the
street.

O friends, our chief state-oracle is
mute:

Mourn for the man of long-enduring
blood,

The statesman-warrior, moderate,
resolute,

Whole in himself, a common good.

Mourn for the man of amplest
influence,

Yet clearest of ambitious crime,

Our greatest yet with least pretence,

Great in council and great in war,

Foremost captain of his time,

Rich in saving common-sense,

And, as the greatest only are,

In his simplicity sublime.

O good gray head which all men
knew,

O voice from which their omens all
men drew,

O iron nerve to true occasion true,

O fall'n at length that tower of
strength

Which stood four-square to all the
winds that blew!

Such was he whom we deplore.

The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.

The great World-victor's victor will
be seen no more.

V.

All is over and done:

Render thanks to the Giver,

England, for thy son.

Let the bell be toll'd.

Render thanks to the Giver,

And render him to the mould.

Under the cross of gold

That shines over city and river,

There he shall rest for ever

Among the wise and the bold.

Let the bell be toll'd:

And a reverent people behold

The towering car, the sable steeds:

Bright let it be with its blazon'd deeds,

Dark in its funeral fold.

Let the bell be toll'd:

And a deeper knell in the heart be

knoll'd;

And the sound of the sorrowing

anthem roll'd

Thro' the dome of the golden cross;

And the volleying cannon thunder his
loss ;
He knew their voices of old.
For many a time in many a clime
His captain's-ear has heard them
boom
Bellowing victory, bellowing doom :
When he with those deep voices
wrought,
Guarding realms and kings from
shame ;
With those deep voices our dead
captain taught
The tyrant, and asserts his claim
In that dread sound to the great name,
Which he has worn so pure of blame,
In praise and in dispraise the same,
A man of well-temper'd frame.
O civic muse, to such a name,
To such a name for ages long,
To such a name.
Preserve a broad approach of fame,
And ever-echoing avenues of song.

VI.

Who is he that cometh, like an hon-
or'd guest,
With banner and with music, with
soldier and with priest,
With a nation weeping, and breaking
on my rest ?
Mighty Seaman, this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea.
Thine island loves thee well, thou
famous man,
The greatest sailor since our world
began.
Now, to the roll of muffled drums,
To thee the greatest soldier comes ;
For this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea ;
His foes were thine ; he kept us free ;
O give him welcome, this is he
Worthy of our gorgeous rites,
And worthy to be laid by thee ;
For this is England's greatest son,
He that gain'd a hundred fights,
Nor ever lost an English gun ;
This is he that far away
Against the myriads of Assaye
Clash'd with his fiery few and won ;
And underneath another sun,

Warring on a later day,
Round affrighted Lisbon drew
The treble works, the vast designs
Of his labor'd rampart-lines,
Where he greatly stood at bay,
Whence he issued forth anew,
And ever great and greater grew,
Beating from the wasted vines
Back to France her banded swarms,
Back to France with countless blows,
Till o'er the hills her eagles flew
Beyond the Pyrenean pines,
Follow'd up in valley and glen
With blare of bugle, clamor of men,
Roll of cannon and clash of arms,
And England pouring on her foes.
Such a war had such a close.
Again their ravening eagle rose
In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadow-
ing wings,
And barking for the thrones of
kings ;
Till one that sought but Duty's iron
crown
On that loud sabbath shook the
spoiler down ;
A day of onsets of despair !
Dash'd on every rocky square
Their surging charges foam'd them-
selves away ;
Last, the Prussian trumpet blew ;
Thro' the long-tormented air
Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,
And down we swept and charged and
overthrew.
So great a soldier taught us there,
What long-enduring hearts could do
In that world-earthquake, Waterloo !
Mighty Seaman tender and true,
And pure as he from taint of craven
guile,
O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,
O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,
If aught of things that here befall
Touch a spirit among things divine,
If love of country move thee there at
all,
Be glad, because his bones are laid by
thine !
And thro' the centuries let a people's
voice
In full acclaim,
A people's voice,

The proof and echo of all human
fame,
A people's voice, when they rejoice
At civic revel and pomp and game,
Attest their great commander's claim
With honor, honor, honor, honor to
him,
Eternal honor to his name.

VII.

A people's voice! we are a people
yet.
Tho' all men else their nobler dreams
forget,
Confused by brainless mobs and law-
less Powers;
Thank Him who isled us here, and
roughly set
His Briton in blown seas and storm-
ing showers,
We have a voice, with which to pay
the debt
Of boundless love and reverence and
regret
To those great men who fought, and
kept it ours.
And keep it ours, O God, from brute
control;
O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye,
the soul
Of Europe, keep our noble England
whole,
And save the one true seed of free-
dom sown
Betwixt a people and their ancient
throne,
That sober freedom out of which
there springs
Our loyal passion for our temperate
kings;
For, saying that, ye help to save man-
kind
Till public wrong be crumbled into
dust,
And drill the raw world for the march
of mind,
Till crowds at length be sane and
crowns be just.
But wink no more in slothful over-
trust.
Remember him who led your hosts;
He bad you guard the sacred coasts.

Your cannons moulder on the sea-
ward wall;
His voice is silent in your council
hall
For ever; and whatever tempests lour
For ever silent; even if they broke
In thunder, silent; yet remember all
He spoke among you, and the Man
who spoke;
Who never sold the truth to serve the
hour,
Nor palter'd with Eternal God for
power;
Who let the turbid streams of rumor
flow
Thro' either babbling world of high
and low;
Whose life was work, whose language
rife
With rugged maxims hewn from life;
Who never spoke against a foe;
Whose eighty winters freeze with one
rebuke
All great self-seekers trampling on
the right:
Truth-teller was our England's Alfred
named;
Truth-lover was our English Duke;
Whatever record leap to light
He never shall be ashamed.

VIII.

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,
Follow'd by the brave of other lands,
He, on whom from both her open
hands
Lavish Honor shower'd all her
stars,
And affluent Fortune emptied all her
horn.
Yea, let all good things await
Him who cares not to be great,
But as he saves or serves the state.
Not once or twice in our rough
island-story,
The path of duty was the way to
glory:
He that walks it, only thirsting
For the right, and learns to deaden
Love of self, before his journey
closes,



"O MARVELLOUSLY MODEST MAIDEN, YOU!"—Page 47.

He shall find the stubborn thistle
bursting

Into glossy purples, which outredden
All voluptuous garden-roses.

Not once or twice in our fair island-
story,

The path of duty was the way to
glory :

He, that ever following her com-
mands,

On with toil of heart and knees and
hands,

Thro' the long gorge to the far light
has won

His path upward, and prevail'd,
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty
scaled

Are close upon the shining table-lands
To which our God Himself is moon
and sun.

Such was he : his work is done.
But while the races of mankind en-
dure,

Let his great example stand
Colossal, seen of every land,
And keep the soldier firm, the
statesman pure :

Till in all lands and thro' all human
story

The path of duty be the way to glory :
And let the land whose hearths he
saved from shame

For many and many an age proclaim
At civic revel and pomp and game,
And when the long-illumined cities
flame,

Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,
With honor, honor, honor, honor to
him,

Eternal honor to his name.

IX.

Peace, his triumph will be sung
By some yet un moulded tongue
Far on in summers that we shall not
see :

Peace, it is a day of pain
For one about whose patriarchal knee
Late the little children clung :
O peace, it is a day of pain
For one, upon whose hand and heart
and brain

Once the weight and fate of Europe
hung.

Ours the pain, be his the gain !

More than is of man's degree

Must be with us, watching here

At this, our great solemnity.

Whom we see not we revere ;

We revere, and we refrain

From talk of battles loud and vain,

And brawling memories all too free

For such a wise humility

As befits a solemn fane :

We revere, and while we hear

The tides of Music's golden sea

Setting toward eternity,

Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,
Until we doubt not that for one so
true

There must be other nobler work to
do

Than when he fought at Waterloo,

And Victor he must ever be.

For tho' the Giant Ages heave the
hill

And break the shore, and evermore

Make and break, and work their will ;

Tho' world on world in myriad myriads
roll

Round us, each with different powers,

And other forms of life than ours,

What know we greater than the soul ?

On God and Godlike men we build
our trust.

Hush, the Dead March wails in the
people's ears :

The dark crowd moves, and there are
sobs and tears :

The black earth yawns : the mortal
disappears ;

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust ;

He is gone who seem'd so great.—

Gone ; but nothing can bereave him

Of the force he made his own

Being here, and we believe him

Something far advanced in State,

And that he wears a truer crown

Than any wreath that man can weave
him.

Speak no more of his renown,

Lay your earthly fancies down,

And in the vast cathedral leave him,

God accept him, Christ receive him.

THE THIRD OF FEBRUARY,

1852.

My Lords, we heard you speak : you
told us all

That England's honest censure went
too far ;

That our free press should cease to
brawl,

Not sting the fiery Frenchman into
war.

It was our ancient privilege, my Lords,
To fling whate'er we felt, not fearing,
into words.

We love not this French God, the
child of Hell,

Wild War, who breaks the converse
of the wise ;

But though we love kind Peace so
well,

We dare not ev'n by silence sanc-
tion lies.

It might be safe our censures to with-
draw ;

And yet, my Lords, not well : there is
a higher law.

As long as we remain, we must speak
free,

Tho' all the storm of Europe on us
break ;

No little German state are we,

But the one voice in Europe : we
must speak ;

That if to-night our greatness were
struck dead,

There might be left some record of the
things we said.

If you be fearful, then must we be bold.

Our Britain cannot salve a tyrant
o'er.

Better the waste Atlantic roll'd

On her and us and ours for ever-
more.

What! have we fought for Freedom
from our prime,

At last to dodge and palter with a
public crime?

Shall we fear *him*? our own we never
fear'd.

From our first Charles by force we
wrung our claims.

Prick'd by the Papal spur, we rear'd,
We flung the burthen of the second
James.

I say, we *never* feared! and as for
these,

We broke them on the land, we drove
them on the seas.

And you, my Lords, you make the
people muse

In doubt if you be of our Barons'
breed—

Were those your sires who fought at
Lewes?

Is this the manly strain of Runny-
mede?

O fall'n nobility, that, overawed,
Would lisp in honey'd whispers of this
monstrous fraud!

We feel, at least, that silence here
were sin,

Not ours the fault if we have feeble
hosts—

If easy patrons of their kin

Have left the last free race with
naked coasts!

They knew the precious things they
had to guard :

For us, we will not spare the tyrant
one hard word.

Tho' niggard throats of Manchester
may bawl,

What England was, shall her true
sons forget?

We are not cotton-spinners all,

But some love England and her
honor yet.

And these in our Thermopylæ shall
stand,

And hold against the world this honor
of the land.

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT
BRIGADE.

I.

HALF a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
Forward, the Light Brigade !
Charge for the guns ! ' he said :
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

II.

' Forward, the Light Brigade ! '
Was there a man dismay'd ?
Not tho' the soldier knew
Some one had blunder'd :
Their's not to make reply,
Their's not to reason why,
Their's but to do and die :
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

III.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volley'd and thunder'd ;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
Rode the six hundred.

IV.

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd as they turn'd in air
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
All the world wonder'd :
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right thro' the line they broke ;
Cossack and Russian
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
Shatter'd and sunder'd
Then they rode back, but not
Not the six hundred.

V.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
Volley'd and thunder'd ;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came thro' the jaws of Death,
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.

VI.

When can their glory fade ?
O the wild charge they made !
All the world wonder'd.
Honor the charge they made !
Honor the Light Brigade,
Noble six hundred !

ODE SUNG AT THE OPENING
OF THE INTERNATIONAL
EXHIBITION.

I.

UPLIFT a thousand voices full and
sweet,
In this wide hall with earth's in-
vention stored,
And praise the invisible universal
Lord,
Who lets once more in peace the
nations meet,
Where Science, Art, and Labor
have outpour'd
Their myriad horns of plenty at our
feet.

II.

O silent father of our Kings to be
Mourn'd in this golden hour of jubilee,
For this, for all, we weep our thanks
to thee !

III.

The world-compelling plan was
thine,—
And, lo ! the long laborious miles

Of Palace; lo! the giant aisles,
 Rich in model and design;
 Harvest-tool and husbandry,
 Loom and wheel and enginery,
 Secrets of the sullen mine,
 Steel and gold, and corn and wine,
 Fabric rough, or fairy-fine,
 Sunny tokens of the Line,
 Polar marvels, and a feast
 Of wonder, out of West and East,
 And shapes and hues of Art divine!
 All of beauty, all of use,
 That one fair planet can produce,
 Brought from under every star,
 Blown from over every main,
 And mixt, as life is mixt with pain,
 The works of peace with works of war.

IV.

Is the goal so far away?
 Far, how far no tongue can say,
 Let us dream our dream to-day.

V.

O ye, the wise who think, the wise
 who reign,
 From growing commerce loose her
 latest chain,
 And let the fair white-wing'd peace-
 maker fly
 To happy havens under all the sky,
 And mix the seasons and the golden
 hours;
 Till each man find his own in all men's
 good,
 And all men work in noble brother-
 hood,
 Breaking their mailed fleets and armed
 towers,
 And ruling by obeying Nature's
 powers,
 And gathering all the fruits of earth
 and crown'd with all her flowers.

A WELCOME TO ALEXANDRA.

MARCH 7, 1863.

SEA-KINGS' daughter from over the
 sea,

Alexandra!

Saxon and Norman and Dane are
 we,
 But all of us Danes in our welcome of
 thee,

Alexandra!

Welcome her, thunders of fort and of
 fleet!

Welcome her, thundering cheer of the
 street!

Welcome her, all things youthful and
 sweet,

Scatter the blossom under her feet!

Break, happy land, into earlier flow-
 ers!

Make music, O bird, in the new-bud-
 ded bowers!

Blazon your mottoes of blessing and
 prayer!

Welcome her, welcome her, all that is
 ours!

Warble, O bugle, and trumpet, blare!
 Flags, flutter out upon turrets and
 towers!

Flames, on the windy headland flare!
 Utter your jubilee, steeple and spire!
 Clash, ye bells, in the merry March
 air!

Flash, ye cities, in rivers of fire!
 Rush to the roof, sudden rocket, and
 higher

Melt into stars for the land's desire!
 Roll and rejoice, jubilant voice,
 Roll as a ground-swell dash'd on the
 strand,

Roar as the sea when he welcomes
 the land,

And welcome her, welcome the land's
 desire,

The sea-kings' daughter as happy as
 fair,

Blissful bride of a blissful heir,
 Bride of the heir of the kings of the
 sea—

O joy to the people and joy to the
 throne,

Come to us, love us and make us your
 own:

For Saxon or Dane or Norman we,

Teuton or Celt, or whatever we be,
 We are each all Dane in our welcome
 of thee,

Alexandra!

A WELCOME TO HER ROYAL
HIGHNESS MARIE ALEX-
ANDROVNA, DUCHESS OF
EDINBURGH.

MARCH 7, 1874.

I.

THE Son of him with whom we strove
for power—

Whose will is lord thro' all his
world-domain—

Who made the serf a man, and
burst his chain—

Has given our Prince his own imper-
ial Flower,

Alexandrovna.

And welcome, Russian flower, a peo-
ple's pride,

To Britain, when her flowers begin
to blow!

From love to love, from home to
home you go,

From mother unto mother, stately
bride,

Marie Alexandrovna!

II.

The golden news along the steppes is
blown,

And at thy name the Tartar tents
are stirr'd;

Elburz and all the Caucasus have
heard;

And all the sultry palms of India
known,

Alexandrovna.

The voices of our universal sea

On capes of Afric as on cliffs of Kent,

The Maoris and that Isle of Con-
tinent,

And loyal pines of Canada murmur
thee,

Marie Alexandrovna!

III.

Fair empires branching, both, in lusty
life!—

Yet Harold's England fell to Nor-
man swords;

Yet thine own land has bow'd to
Tartar hordes

Since English Harold gave its throne
a wife,

Alexandrovna!

For thrones and peoples are as waifs
that swing,

And float or fall, in endless ebb and
flow;

But who love best have best the
grace to know

That Love by right divine is death-
less king,

Marie Alexandrovna!

IV.

And Love has led thee to the stranger
land,

Where men are bold and strongly
say their say;—

See, empire upon empire smiles to-
day,

As thou with thy young lover hand in
hand

Alexandrovna!

So now thy fuller life is in the west,

Whose hand at home was gracious
to thy poor:

Thy name was blest within the
narrow door;

Here also, Marie, shall thy name be
blest, Marie Alexandrovna!

V.

Shall fears and jealous hatreds flame
again?

Or at thy coming, Princess, every-
where,

The blue heaven break, and some
diviner air

Breathe thro' the world and change
the hearts of men,

Alexandrovna?

But hearts that change not, love that
cannot cease,

And peace be yours, the peace of
soul in soul!

And howsoever this wild world may
roll,

Between your peoples truth and man-
ful peace,

Alfred—Alexandrovna!

THE GRANDMOTHER.

I.

AND Willy, my eldest-born, is gone, you say, little Anne?
Ruddy and white, and strong on his legs, he looks like a man.
And Willy's wife has written: she never was over-wise,
Never the wife for Willy: he wouldn't take my advice.

II.

For, Annie, you see, her father was not the man to save,
Hadn't a head to manage, and drank himself into his grave.
Pretty enough, very pretty! but I was against it for one.
Eh!—but he wouldn't hear me—and Willy, you say, is gone.

III.

Willy, my beauty, my eldest-born, the flower of the flock;
Never a man could fling him: for Willy stood like a rock.
'Here's a leg for a babe of a week!' says doctor; and he would be bound,
There was not his like that year in twenty parishes round.

IV.

Strong of his hands, and strong on his legs, but still of his tongue!
I ought to have gone before him: I wonder he went so young.
I cannot cry for him, Annie: I have not long to stay;
Perhaps I shall see him the sooner, for he lived far away.

V.

Why do you look at me, Annie? you think I am hard and cold;
But all my children have gone before me, I am so old:
I cannot weep for Willy, nor can I weep for the rest;
Only at your age, Annie, I could have wept with the best.

VI.

For I remember a quarrel I had with your father, my dear,
All for a slanderous story, that cost me many a tear.
I mean your grandfather, Annie: it cost me a world of woe,
Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago.

VII.

For Jenny, my cousin, had come to the place, and I knew right well
That Jenny had tript in her time: I knew, but I would not tell.
And she to be coming and slandering me, the base little liar!
But the tongue is a fire as you know, my dear, the tongue is a fire.

VIII.

And the parson made it his text that week, and he said likewise,
That a lie which is half a truth is ever the blackest of lies,
That a lie which is all a lie may be met and fought with outright,
But a lie which is part a truth is a harder matter to fight.

IX.

And Willy had not been down to the farm for a week and a day ;
And all things look'd half-dead, tho' it was the middle of May.
Jenny, to slander me, who knew what Jenny had been !
But soiling another, Annie, will never make oneself clean.

X.

And I cried myself well-nigh blind, and all of an evening late
I climb'd to the top of the garth, and stood by the road at the gate.
The moon like a rick on fire was rising over the dale,
And whit, whit, whit, in the bush beside me chirrup the nightingale.

XI.

All of a sudden he stopt : there past by the gate of the farm,
Willy,—he didn't see me,—and Jenny hung on his arm.
Out into the road I started, and spoke I scarce knew how ;
Ah, there's no fool like the old one—it makes me angry now.

XII.

Willy stood up like a man, and look'd the thing that he meant ;
Jenny, the viper, made me a mocking curtsey and went.
And I said, ' Let us part : in a hundred years it'll all be the same,
You cannot love me at all, if you love not my good name.'

XIII.

And he turn'd, and I saw his eyes all wet, in the sweet moonshine :
' Sweetheart, I love you so well that your good name is mine.
And what do I care for Jane, let her speak of you well or ill ;
But marry me out of hand : we two shall be happy still.'

XIV.

' Marry you, Willy ! ' said I, ' but I needs must speak my mind,
And I fear you'll listen to tales, be jealous and hard and unkind.'
But he turn'd and claspt me in his arms, and answer'd, ' No, love, no ;'
Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago.

XV.

So Willy and I were wedded : I wore a lilac gown ;
And the ringers rang with a will, and he gave the ringers a crown.
But the first that ever I bare was dead before he was born,
Shadow and shine is life, little Annie, flower and thorn.

XVI.

That was the first time, too, that ever I thought of death.
There lay the sweet little body that never had drawn a breath.
I had not wept, little Anne, not since I had been a wife ;
But I wept like a child that day, for the babe had fought for his life.

XVII.

His dear little face was troubled, as if with anger or pain :
I look'd at the still little body—his trouble had all been in vain.
For Willy I cannot weep, I shall see him another morn :
But I wept like a child for the child that was dead before he was born.

XVIII.

But he cheer'd me, my good man, for he seldom said me nay :
Kind, like a man, was he ; like a man, too, would have his way :
Never jealous—not he : we had many a happy year ;
And he died, and I could not weep—my own time seem'd so near.

XIX.

But I wish'd it had been God's will that I, too, then could have died :
I began to be tired a little, and fain had slept at his side.
And that was ten years back, or more, if I don't forget :
But as to the children, Annie, they're all about me yet.

XX.

Pattering over the boards, my Annie who left me at two,
Patter she goes, my own little Annie, an Annie like you :
Pattering over the boards, she comes and goes at her will,
While Harry is in the five-acre and Charlie ploughing the hill.

XXI.

And Harry and Charlie, I hear them too—they sing to their team :
Often they come to the door in a pleasant kind of a dream.
They come and sit by my chair, they hover about my bed—
I am not always certain if they be alive or dead.

XXII.

And yet I know for a truth, there's none of them left alive ;
For Harry went at sixty, your father at sixty-five :
And Willy, my eldest-born, at nigh threescore and ten ;
I knew them all as babies, and now they're elderly men.

XXIII.

For mine is a time of peace, it is not often I grieve ;
I am oftener sitting at home in my father's farm at eve :
And the neighbors come and laugh and gossip, and so do I ;
I find myself often laughing at things that have long gone by.

XXI

To be sure the preacher says, our sins should make us sad :
But mine is a time of peace, and there is Grace to be had ;
And God, not man, is the Judge of us all when life shall cease :
And in this Book, little Annie, the message is one of Peace.

XXV.

And age is a time of peace, so it be free from pain,
And happy has been my life ; but I would not live it again.
I seem to be tired a little, that's all, and long for rest ;
Only at your age, Annie, I could have wept with the best.

XXVI.

So Willy has gone, my beauty, my eldest-born, my flower ,
But how can I weep for Willy, he has but gone for an hour,—
Gone for a minute, my son, from this room into the next ;
I, too, shall go in a minute. . What time have I to be vexed ?

XXVII.

And Willy's wife has written, she never was over-wise.
Get me my glasses, Annie : thank God that I keep my eyes.
There is but a trifle left you, when I shall have past away.
But stay with the old woman now : you cannot have long to stay.

NORTHERN FARMER.

OLD STYLE.

I.

WHEER 'asta beän saw long and meä liggin' 'ere aloän ?
Noorse ? thourt nowt o' a noorse : whoy, Doctor's abeän an' agoän :
Says that I moänt 'a naw moor aäle : but I beänt a fool :
Git ma my aäle, fur I beänt a-gawin' to break my rule.

II.

Doctors, they knaws nowt, fur a says what's nawways true :
Naw soort o' koind o' use to saäy the things that a do.
I've 'ed my point o' aäle ivry noight sin' I beän 'ere.
An' I've 'ed my quart ivry market-noight for foorty year.

III.

Parson's a beän loikewise, an' a sittin' 'ere o' my bed.
' The amoighty's a taäkin o' you ' to 'issén, my friend,' a said,
An' a towd ma my sins, an's toithe were due, an' I gied it in hond ;
I done moy duty boy 'um, as I' a done boy the lond.

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I done moy duty boy 'um, as I' a done boy the lond.

¹ ou as in hour.

IV.

Larn'd a ma' beä. I reckons I 'annot sa mooch to larn.
 But a cast oop, thot a did, 'bout Bessy Marris's barne.
 Thaw a knaws I hallus voäted wi' Squoire an' choorch an' staäte,
 An' i' the woost o' toimes I wur niver agin the raäte.

V.

An' I hallus coom'd to 's chooch afoor moy Sally wur deäd,
 An' 'eärd 'um a bummin' awaäy loike a buzzard-clock¹ ower my 'eäd,
 An' I niver knaw'd whot a meän'd but I thowt a 'ad summut to saäy,
 An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said an' I coom'd awaäy.

VI.

Bessy Marris's barne! tha knaws she laäid it to meä.
 Mowt a beän, mayhap, for she wur a bad un, sheä.
 'Siver, I kep 'um, I kep 'um, my lass, tha mun understand;
 I done moy duty boy 'um as I 'a done boy the lond.

VII.

But Parson a cooms an' a goäs, an' a says it eäsy an' freeä
 'The amoighty's a taäkin o' you to 'issén, my friend,' says 'eä.
 I weänt saäy men be loiars, thaw summun said it in 'aäste:
 But 'e reäds woun sarmin a weeäk, an' I 'a stubb'd Thurnaby waäste.

VIII.

D'ya moind the waäste, my lass? naw, naw, tha was not born then;
 Theer wur a boggle in it, I often 'eärd 'um mysen;
 Moäst loike a butter-bump,² fur I 'eärd 'um about an' about,
 But I stubb'd 'um oop wi' the lot, an' raäved an' rembled 'um out.

IX.

Keäper's it wur; fo' they fun 'um theer a-laäid of 'is faäce
 Down i' the woild 'enemies³ afoor I coom'd to the plaäce.
 Noäks or Thimbleby—toäner⁴ 'ed shot 'um as deäd as a naäil.
 Noäks wur 'ang'd for it oop at 'soize—but git ma my aäle.

X.

Dubbut looök at the waäste: theer warn't not feeäd for a cow;
 Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz, an' looök at it now—
 Warnt worth nowt a haäcre, an' now theer's lots o' feeäd,
 Fourscoor⁵ yows upon it an' some on it down i' seeäd.⁶

XI.

Nobbut a bit on it's left, an' I meän'd to 'a stubb'd it at fall,
 Done it ta-year I meän'd, an' runn'd plow thruff it an' all,
 If godamoighty an' parson 'ud nobbut let ma aloän,
 Meä, wi' haäte hoonderd haäcre o' Squoire's, an' lond o' my oän.

¹ Cockchafer. ² Bittern. ³ Anemones. ⁴ One or other. ⁵ ou as in hour. ⁶ Clover.

XII.

Do godamoighty know what a's doing a-taäkin' o' meä?
I beänt wonn as saws 'ere a beän an' yonder a peä;
An' Squoire 'ull be sa mad an' all—a' dear a' dear!
And I 'a managed for Squoire coom Michaelmas thutty year.

XIII.

A mowt 'a taäen owd Joänes, as 'ant not a 'aäpoth o' sense,
Or a mowt 'a taäen young Robins—a niver mended a fence:
But godamoighty a moost taäke meä an' taäke ma now
Wi' aäf the cows to cauve an' Thurnaby hoälm to plow!

XIV.

Looök 'aw quoloty smoiles when they seeäs ma a passin' boy,
Says to thessén naw doubt 'what a man a beä sewer-loy!
Fur they knaws what I beän to Squoire sin fust a coom'd to the 'All;
I done moy duty by Squoire an' I done moy duty boy hall.

Squoire's i' Lunnon, an' summun I reckons 'ull 'a to wroite,
For whoä's tō howd the lond ater meä thot muddles ma quoit;
Sartin-sewer I beä, thot a weänt niver give it to Joänes,
Naw, nor a moänt to Robins—a niver rembles the stoäns.

XVI.

But summun 'ull come ater meä mayhap wi' 'is kittle o' steäm
Huzzin' an' maäzin' the blessed feälds wi' the Devil's oän teäm.
Sin' I mun doy I mun doy, thaw loife they says is sweet,
But sin' I mun doy I mun doy, for I couldn abeär to see it.

XVII.

What atta stannin' theer fur, an' doesn bring ma the ääle?
Doctor's a 'toättler, lass, an a's hallus i' the owd taäle;
I weänt breäk rules fur Doctor, a knaws naw moor nör a floy;
Git ma my ääle I tell tha, an' if I mun doy I mun doy.

NORTHERN FARMER.

NEW STYLE.

I.

DOSN'T thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as they canters awaäy?
Proputty, proputty, proputty—that's what I 'ears 'em saäy.
Proputty, proputty, proputty—Sam, thou's an ass for thy paaäns:
Theer's moor sense i' one o' 'is legs nor in all thy braaäns.

II.

Woä—theer's a craw to pluck wi' tha, Sam: yon's parson's 'ouse—
 Dosn't thou knaw that a man mun be eäther a man or a mouse?
 Time to think on it then; for thou'll be twenty to weeäk.¹
 Proputty, proputty—woä then woä—let ma 'ear mysén speäk.

III.

Me an' thy muther, Sammy, 'as beän a-talkin' o' thee;
 Thou's beän talkin' to muther, an' she beän a tellin' it me.
 Thou'll not marry for munny—thou's sweet upo' parson's lass—
 Noä—thou'll marry for luvv—an' we boäth on us thinks tha an ass.

IV.

Seeä'd her to-daäy goä by—Saäint's-daäy—they was ringin the bells.
 She's a beauty thou thinks—an' soä is scoors o' gells,
 Them as' as munny an' all—wot's a beauty?—the flower as blaws.
 But proputty, proputty sticks, an' proputty, proputty graws.

V.

Do'ant be stunt:² taäke time: I knaws what maäkes tha sa mad.
 Warn't I craäzed fur the lasses mysén when I wur a lad?
 But I knaw'd a Quaäker feller as often 'as tow'd ma this:
 'Doänt thou marry for munny, but goä wheer munny is!'

VI.

An' I went wheer munny war: an' thy muther coom to 'and,
 Wi' lots o' munny laa'id by, an' a nicetish bit o' land.
 Maäybe she warn't a beauty:—I niver giv it a thowt—
 But warn't she as good to cuddle an' kiss as a lass as 'ant nowt?

VII.

Parson's lass 'ant nowt, an' she weänt 'a nowt when 'e's deäd,
 Mun be a guvness, lad, or summut, and addle³ her breäd:
 Why? fur 'e's nobbut a curate, an' weänt niver git hissen clear,
 An' 'e maäde the bed as 'e ligs on afoor 'e coom'd to the shere.

VIII.

'An thin 'e coom'd to the parish wi' lots o' Varsity debt,
 Stook to his taa'il they did, an' 'e 'ant got shut on 'em yet.
 An' 'e ligs on 'is back i' the grip, wi' noän to lend 'im a shuvv,
 Woorse nor a far-welter'd⁴ yowe: fur, Sammy, 'e married fur luvv.

¹ This week.² Obstinate.³ Earn.⁴ Or fow-welter'd,—said of a sheep lying on its back.

IX.

Luvv? what's luvv? thou can luvv thy lass an' 'er munny too,
Maakin' 'em goâ together as they've good right to do.
Could'n I luvv thy muther by cause o' 'er munny laaïd by?
Naây—fur I luvv'd 'er a vast sight moor fur it: reâson why.

X.

Ay an' thy muther says thou wants to marry the lass,
Cooms of a gentleman burn: an' we boâth on us thinks tha an ass.
Woâ then, propuppy, wiltha?—an ass as near as mays nowt!—
Woâ then, wiltha? dangtha!—the bees is as fell as owt.²

XI.

Breâk me a bit o' the esh for his 'eäd, lad, out o' the fence!
Gentleman burn! what's gentleman burn? is it shillins an' pence?
Propuppy, propuppy's ivrything 'ere, an', Sammy, I'm blest
If it isn't the saâme oop yonder, fur them as 'as it's the best.

XII.

Tis'n them as 'as munny as breâks into 'ouses an' steäls,
Them as 'as coäts to their backs an' taâkes their regular meäls.
Noâ, but it's them as niver knows wheer a meäl's to be 'ad.
Taâke my word for it, Sammy, the poor in a loomp is bad.

XIII.

Them or thir feythers, tha sees, mun 'a beän a laäzy lot,
Fur work mun a 'gone to the gittin 'whiniver munny was got.
Feyther 'ad ammost nowt; leästways 'is munny was 'id.
But 'e tued an moil'd' 'issén deäd, an 'e died a good un, 'e did.

XIV.

Looök thou theer wheer Wigglesby beck cooms out by the 'ill!
Feyther run oop to the farm, an' I runs oop to the mill;
An' I'll run oop to the brig, an' that thou'll live to see;
And if thou marries a good un I'll leäve the land to thee.

XV.

Thim's my noätions, Sammy, wheerby I means to stick;
But if thou marries a bad un, I'll leäve the land to Dick.—
Coom oop, propuppy, propuppy—that's what I 'ears 'im saây—
Propuppy, propuppy, propuppy—canter 'an canter awaây.

¹ Makes nothing.

² The flies are as fierce as anything.

THE DAISY.

WRITTEN AT EDINBURGH.

O LOVE, what hours were thine and mine,
In lands of palm and southern pine ;
In lands of palm, of orange-blossom,
Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine.

What Roman strength Turbìa show'd
In ruin, by the mountain road ;
How like a gem, beneath, the city
Of little Monaco, basking, glow'd.

How richly down the rocky dell
The torrent vineyard streaming fell
To meet the sun and sunny waters,
That only heaved with a summer swell.

What slender campanili grew
By bays, the peacock's neck in hue ;
Where, here and there, on sandy beaches
A milky-bell'd amaryllis blew.

How young Columbus seem'd to rove,
Yet present in his natal grove,
Now watching high on mountain cornice,
And steering, now, from a purple cove,

Now pacing mute by ocean's rim ;
Till, in a narrow street and dim,
I stay'd the wheels at Cogoleto,
And drank, and loyally drank to him.

Nor knew we well what pleased us most,
Not the clipt palm of which they boast ;
But distant color, happy hamlet,
A moulder'd citadel on the coast,

Or tower, or high hill-convent, seen
A light amid its olives green ;
Or olive-hoary cape in ocean ;
Or rosy blossom in hot ravine,

Where oleanders flush'd the bed
Of silent torrents, gravel-spread ;

And, crossing, oft we saw the glisten
Of ice, far up on a mountain head.

We loved that hall, tho' white and cold,
Those niched shapes of noble mould,
A princely people's awful princes,
The grave, severe Genovese of old.

At Florence too what golden hours,
In those long galleries, were ours ;
What drives about the fresh Cas-
cinè,
Or walks in Boboli's ducal bowers.

In bright vignettes, and each com-
plete,
Of tower or duomo, sunny-sweet,
Or palace, how the city glitter'd,
Thro' cypress avenues, at our feet.

But when we crost the Lombard plain
Remember what a plague of rain ;
Of rain at Reggio, rain at Parma ;
At Lodi, rain, Piacenza, rain.

And stern and sad (so rare the smiles
Of sunlight) look'd the Lombard
piles ;
Porch-pillars on the lion resting,
And sombre, old, colonnaded aisles.

O Milan, O the chanting quires,
The giant windows' blazon'd fires,
The height, the space, the gloom,
the glory !
A mount of marble, a hundred spires !

I climb'd the roofs at break of day ;
Sun-smitten Alps before me lay.
I stood among the silent statues,
And statued pinnacles, mute as they.

How faintly-flush'd, how phantom-
fair,
Was Monte Rosa, hanging there
A thousand shadowy-pencill'd val-
leys
And snowy dells in a golden air.

Remember how we came at last
To Como ; shower and storm and
blast

Had blown the lake beyond his
limit,
And all was flooded; and how we
past

From Como, when the light was gray,
And in my head, for half the day,
The rich Virgilian rustic measure
Of Lari Maxumè, all the way,

Like ballad-burthen music, kept,
As on The Lariano crept
To that fair port below the castle
Of Queen Theodolind, where we
slept;

Or hardly slept, but watch'd awake
A cypress in the moonlight shake,
The moonlight touching o'er a ter-
race
One tall Agavè above the lake.

What more? we took our last adieu,
And up the snowy Splügen drew,
But ere we reach'd the highest
summit
I pluck'd a daisy, I gave it you.

It told of England then to me,
And now it tells of Italy.
O love, we two shall go no longer
To lands of summer across the sea;

So dear a life your arms enfold
Whose crying is a cry for gold:
Yet here to-night in this dark city,
When ill and weary, alone and cold,

I found, tho' crush'd to hard and dry,
This nurseling of another sky
Still in the little book you lent me,
And where you tenderly laid it by:

And I forgot the clouded Forth,
The gloom that saddens Heaven and
Earth,

The bitter east, the misty summer
And gray metropolis of the North.

Perchance, to lull the throbs of pain,
Perchance, to charm a vacant brain,
Perchance, to dream you still beside
me,
My fancy fled to the South again.

TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE.

COME, when no graver cares employ,
Godfather, come and see your boy:
Your presence will be sun in win-
ter,
Making the little one leap for joy.

For, being of that honest few,
Who give the Fiend himself his due,
Should eighty-thousand college-
councils
Thunder 'Anathema,' friend, at you;

Should all our churchmen foam in
spite
At you, so careful of the right,
Yet one lay-bearth would give you
welcome
(Take it and come) to the Isle o'
Wight;

Where, far from noise and smoke of
town,
I watch the twilight falling brown
All round a careless-order'd garden
Close to the ridge of a noble down.

You'll have no scandal while you
dine,
But honest talk and wholesome wit
And only hear the magpie gossip
Garrulous under a roof of pine:

For groves of pine on either hand,
To break the blast of winter, stand;
And further on, the hoary Channel
Tumbles a billow on chalk and sand;

Where, if below the milky steep
Some ship of battle slowly creep,
And on thro' zones of light and
shadow
Glimmer away to the lonely deep,

We might discuss the Northern sin
Which made a selfish war begin;
Dispute the claims, arrange the
chances;
Emperor, Ottoman, which shall win:

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O Milan, O the chanting quires,
The giant windows' blazon'd fires,
The height, the space, the gloom,
the glory !
A mount of marble, a hundred spires !

I climb'd the roofs at break of day ;
Sun-smitten Alps before me lay.
I stood among the silent statues,
And statued pinnacles, mute as they.

How faintly-flush'd, how phantom-fair,
Was Monte Rosa, hanging there
A thousand shadowy-pencill'd val-
leys
And snowy dells in a golden air.

Remember how we came at last
To Como ; shower and storm and blast

Had blown the lake beyond his
limit,
And all was flooded; and how we
past

From Como, when the light was gray,
And in my head, for half the day,
The rich Virgilian rustic measure
Of Lari Maxume, all the way,

Like ballad-burthen music, kept,
As on The Lariano crept
To that fair port below the castle
Of Queen Theodolind, where we
slept;

Or hardly slept, but watch'd awake
A cypress in the moonlight shake,
The moonlight touching o'er a ter-
race
One tall Agavè above the lake.

What more? we took our last adieu,
And up the snowy Splügen drew,
But ere we reach'd the highest
summit
I pluck'd a daisy, I gave it you.

It told of England then to me,
And now it tells of Italy.
O love, we two shall go no longer
To lands of summer across the sea;

So dear a life your arms enfold
Whose crying is a cry for gold:
Yet here to-night in this dark city,
When ill and weary, alone and cold,

I found, tho' crush'd to hard and dry,
This nurseling of another sky
Still in the little book you lent me,
And where you tenderly laid it by:

And I forgot the clouded Forth,
The gloom that saddens Heaven and
Earth,

The bitter east, the misty summer
And gray metropolis of the North.

Perchance, to lull the throbs of pain,
Perchance, to charm a vacant brain,
Perchance, to dream you still beside
me,
My fancy fled to the South again.

TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE.

COME, when no graver cares employ,
Godfather, come and see your boy:
Your presence will be sun in win-
ter,
Making the little one leap for joy.

For, being of that honest few,
Who give the Fiend himself his due,
Should eighty-thousand college-
councils
Thunder 'Anathema,' friend, at you;

Should all our churchmen foam in
spite
At you, so careful of the right,
Yet one lay-bearth would give you
welcome
(Take it and come) to the Isle o'
Wight;

Where, far from noise and smoke of
town,
I watch the twilight falling brown
All round a careless-order'd garden
Close to the ridge of a noble down.

You'll have no scandal while you
dine,
But honest talk and wholesome wit
And only hear the magpie gossip
Garrulous under a roof of pine:

For groves of pine on either hand,
To break the blast of winter, stand;
And further on, the hoary Channel
Tumbles a billow on chalk and sand;

Where, if below the milky steep
Some ship of battle slowly creep,
And on thro' zones of light and
shadow
Glimmer away to the lonely deep,

We might discuss the Northern sin
Which made a selfish war begin;
Dispute the claims, arrange the
chances;
Emperor, Ottoman, which shall win:

Or whether war's avenging rod
 Shall lash all Europe into blood ;
 Till you should turn to dearer mat-
 ters,
 Dear to the man that is dear to God ;

How best to help the slender store,
 How mend the dwellings, of the poor ;
 How gain in life, as life advances,
 Valor and charity more and more.

Come, Maurice, come : the lawn as
 yet
 Is hoar with rime, or spongy-wet ;
 But when the wreath of March has
 blossom'd,
 Crocus, anemone, violet,

Or later, pay one visit here,
 For those are few we hold as dear ;
 Nor pay but one, but come for
 many,
 Many and many a happy year.

January, 1854.

WILL.

I.

O WELL for him whose will is strong !
 He suffers, but he will not suffer
 long ;
 He suffers, but he cannot suffer
 wrong :
 For him nor moves the loud world's
 random mock,
 Nor all Calamity's hugest waves con-
 found,
 Who seems a promontory of rock,
 That, compass'd round with turbulent
 sound,
 In middle ocean meets the surging
 shock.
 Tempest-buffeted, citadel-crown'd.

II.

But ill for him who, bettering not
 with time,
 Corrupts the strength of heaven-de-
 scended Will,

And ever weaker grows thro' acted
 crime,
 Or seeming-genial venial fault,
 Recurring and suggesting still !
 He seems as one whose footsteps halt,
 Toiling in immeasurable sand,
 And o'er a weary sultry land,
 Far beneath a blazing vault,
 Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous
 hill,
 The city sparkles like a grain of salt.

IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ.

ALL along the valley, stream that
 flashest white,
 Deepening thy voice with the deepen-
 ing of the night,
 All along the valley, where thy waters
 flow,
 I walk'd with one I loved two and
 thirty years ago.
 All along the valley, while I walk'd
 to-day,
 The two and thirty years were a mist
 that rolls away ;
 For all along the valley, down thy
 rocky bed,
 Thy living voice to me was as the
 voice of the dead,
 And all along the valley, by rock and
 cave and tree,
 The voice of the dead was a living
 voice to me.

IN THE GARDEN AT SWAINSTON.

NIGHTINGALES warbled without,
 Within was weeping for thee :
 Shadows of three dead men
 Walk'd in the walks with me,
 Shadows of three dead men and
 thou wast one of the three.

Nightingales sang in his woods :
 The Master was far away :
 Nightingales warbled and sang
 Of a passion that lasts but a day ;

Still in the house in his coffin the
Prince of courtesy lay.

Two dead men have I known
In courtesy like to thee:
Two dead men have I loved
With a love that ever will be:
Three dead men have I loved and
thou art last of the three.

THE FLOWER.

ONCE in a golden hour
I cast to earth a seed.
Up there came a flower,
The people said, a weed.

To and fro they went
Thro' my garden-bower,
And muttering discontent
Cursed me and my flower.

Then it grew so tall
It wore a crown of light,
But thieves from o'er the wall
Stole the seed by night.

Sow'd it far and wide
By every town and tower,
Till all the people cried,
'Splendid is the flower.'

Read my little fable:
He that runs may read.
Most can raise the flowers now,
For all have got the seed.

And some are pretty enough,
And some are poor indeed;
And now again the people
Call it but a weed.

REQUIESCAT.

FAIR is her cottage in its place,
Where yon broad water sweetly
slowly glides.
It sees itself from thatch to base
Dream in the sliding tides.

And fairer she, but ah how soon to die!
Her quiet dream of life this hour
may cease.
Her peaceful being slowly passes by
To some more perfect peace.

THE SAILOR BOY.

HE rose at dawn and, fired with hope,
Shot o'er the seething harbor-bar,
And reach'd the ship and caught the
rope,
And whistled to the morning star.

And while he whistled long and loud
He heard a fierce mermaiden cry,
'O boy, tho' thou art young and
proud,
I see the place where thou wilt lie.

'The sands and yeasty surges mix
In caves about the dreary bay,
And on thy ribs the limpet sticks,
And in thy heart the scrawl shall
play.'

'Fool,' he answer'd, 'death is sure
To those that stay and those that
roam,
But I will nevermore endure
To sit with empty hands at home.

'My mother clings about my neck,
My sisters crying, "Stay for shame;"
My father raves of death and wreck,
They are all to blame, they are all
to blame.

'God help me! save I take my part
Of danger on the roaring sea,
A devil rises in my heart,
Far worse than any death to me.'

THE ISLET.

'WHITHER, O whither, love, shall
we go,
For a score of sweet little summers
or so?'
The sweet little wife of the singer
said,

On the day that follow'd the day she
was wed,
'Whither, O whither, love, shall we
go?'

And the singer shaking his curly head
Turn'd as he sat, and struck the keys
There at his right with a sudden
crash,

Singing, 'And shall it be over the seas
With a crew that is neither rude nor
rash,

But a bevy of Eroses apple-cheek'd,
In a shallop of crystal ivory-beak'd,
With a satin sail of a ruby glow,
To a sweet little Eden on earth that
I know,

A mountain islet pointed and peak'd;
Waves on a diamond shingle dash,
Cataract brooks to the ocean run,
Fairly-delicate palaces shine
Mixt with myrtle and clad with vine,
And overstream'd and silvery-
streak'd

With many a rivulet high against the
Sun

The facets of the glorious mountain
flash

Above the valleys of palm and pine.'

'Thither, O thither, love, let us go.'

'No, no, no !

For in all that exquisite isle, my
dear,

There is but one bird with a musi-
cal throat,

And his compass is but of a single
note,

That it makes one weary to hear.'

'Mock me not ! mock me not ! love,
let us go.'

'No, love, no.

For the bud ever breaks into bloom
on the tree,

And a storm never wakes on the
lonely sea,

And a worm is there in the lonely
wood,

That pierces the liver and blackens
the blood ;

And makes it a sorrow to be.'

CHILD-SONGS.

I.

THE CITY CHILD.

DAINTY little maiden, whither would
you wander?

Whither from this pretty home, the
home where mother dwells?

'Far and far away,' said the dainty
little maiden,

'All among the gardens, auriculas,
anemones,

Roses and lilies and Canterbury-
bells.'

Dainty little maiden, whither would
you wander?

Whither from this pretty house, this
city-house of ours?

'Far and far away,' said the dainty
little maiden,

'All among the meadows, the clover
and the clematis,

Daisies and kingcups and honey-
suckle-flowers.'

II.

MINNIE AND WINNIE.

MINNIE and Winnie

Slept in a shell.

Sleep, little ladies !

And they slept well.

Pink was the shell within,

Silver without ;

Sounds of the great sea

Wander'd about.

Sleep, little ladies !

Wake not soon !

Echo on echo

Dies to the moon.

Two bright stars

Peep'd into the shell.

'What are they dreaming of ?

Who can tell ?'

Started a green linnet
Out of the croft;
Wake, little ladies,
The sun is aloft!

THE SPITEFUL LETTER.

HERE, it is here, the close of the year,
And with it a spiteful letter.
My name in song has done him much
wrong,
For himself has done much better.

O little bard, is your lot so hard,
If men neglect your pages?
I think not much of yours or of mine,
I hear the roll of the ages.

Rhymes and rhymes in the range of
the times!
Are mine for the moment stronger?
Yet hate me not, but abide your lot,
I last but a moment longer.

This faded leaf, our names are as brief;
What room is left for a hater?
Yet the yellow leaf hates the greener
leaf,
For it hangs one moment later.

Greater than I—is that your cry?
And men will live to see it.
Well—if it be so—so it is, you know;
And if it be so, so be it.

Brief, brief is a ummer leaf,
But this is the time of hollies.
O hollies and ivies and evergreens,
How I hate the spites and the
follies!

LITERARY SQUABBLES.

AN God! the petty fools of rhyme
That shriek and sweat in pigmy wars
Before the stony face of Time,
And look'd at by the silent stars:

Who hate each other for a song,
And do their little best to bite

And pinch their brethren in the throng,
And scratch the very dead for spite:

And strain to make an inch of room
For their sweet selves, and cannot
hear
The sullen Lethe rolling doom
On them and theirs and all things
here:

When one small touch of Charity
Could lift them nearer God-like state
Than if the crowded Orb should cry
Like those who cried Diana great:

And I too, talk, and lose the touch
I talk of. Surely, after all,
The noblest answer unto such
Is perfect stillness when they brawl.

THE VICTIM.

I.

A PLAGUE upon the people fell,
A famine after laid them low,
Then thorpe and byre arose in fire,
For on them brake the sudden foe;
So thick they died the people cried,
'The Gods are moved against the
land.'

The Priest in horror about his altar
To Thor and Odin lifted a hand:
'Help us from famine
And plague and strife!
What would you have of us?
Human life?
Were it our nearest,
Were it our dearest,
(Answer, O answer)
We give you his life.'

II.

But still the foeman spoil'd and burn'd,
And cattle died, and deer in wood,
And bird in air, and fishes turn'd
And whiten'd all the rolling flood;
And dead men lay all over the way,
Or down in a furrow scathed with
flame:
And ever and aye the Priesthood
moan'd,

Till at last it seem'd that an answer
came.

'The King is happy
In child and wife;
Take you his dearest,
Give us a life.'

III.

The Priest went out by heath and hill;
The King was hunting in the wild;
They found the mother sitting still;
She cast her arms about the child.
The child was only eight summers old,
His beauty still with his years in-
creased,

His face was ruddy, his hair was gold,
He seem'd a victim due to the priest.
The Priest beheld him,
And cried with joy,
'The Gods have answer'd:
We give them the boy.'

IV.

The King return'd from out the wild,
He bore but little game in hand;
The mother said, 'They have taken
the child

To spill his blood and heal the land:
The land is sick, the people diseased,
And blight and famine on all the lea:
The holy Gods, they must be appeased,
So I pray you tell the truth to me.

They have taken our son,
They will have his life.
Is *he* your dearest?
Or I, the wife?'

V.

The King bent low, with hand on brow
He stay'd his arms upon his knee:
'O wife, what use to answer now?
For now the Priest has judged for
me.'

The King was shaken with holy fear;
'The Gods,' he said, 'would have
chosen well;

Yet both are near, and both are dear
And which the dearest I cannot tell!
But the Priest was happy,
His victim won:
'We have his dearest,
His only son!'

VI.

The rites prepared, the victim bared,
The knife uprising toward the blow
To the altar-stone she sprang alone,
'Me, not my darling, no!'

He caught her away with a sudden
cry;

Suddenly from him brake his wife,
And shrieking 'I am his dearest, I—
I am his dearest!' rush'd on the
knife.

And the Priest was happy,

'O, Father Odin,
We give you a life.

Which was his nearest?

Who was his dearest?

The Gods have answer'd
We give them the wife!'

WAGES.

GLORY of warrior, glory of orator, glory of song,

Paid with a voice flying by to be lost on an endless sea—

Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle, to right the wrong—

Nay, but she aim'd not at glory, no lover of glory she:

Give her the glory of going on, and still to be.

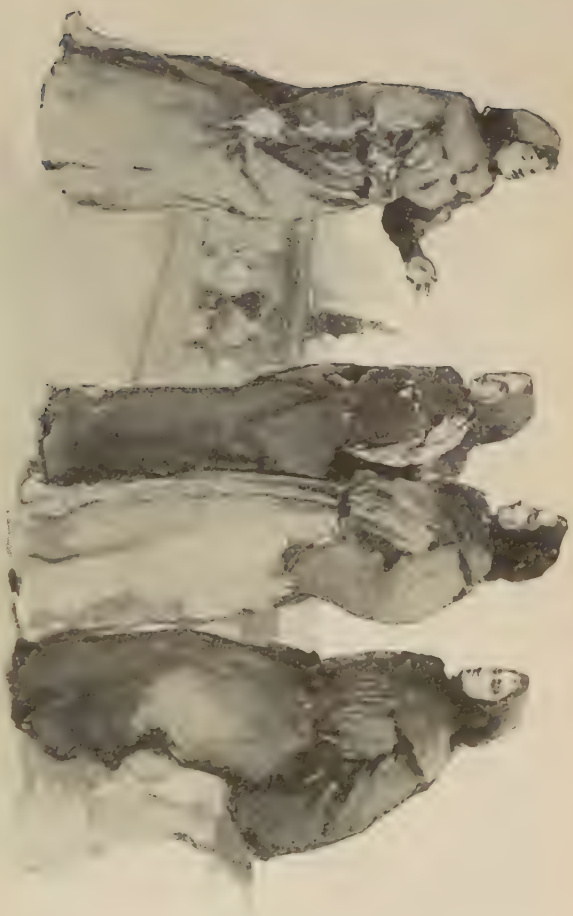
The wages of sin is death: if the wages of Virtue be dust,

Would she have heart to endure for the life of the worm and the fly?

She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seats of the just,

To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in a summer sky:

Give her the wages of going on, and not to die.



"CAME A MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD."—*Page 49.*

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THE HIGHER PANTHEISM.

THE sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and the plains—
Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him who reigns?

Is not the Vision He? tho' He be not that which He seems?
Dreams are true while they last, and do we not live in dreams?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body and limb,
Are they not sign and symbol of thy division from Him?

Dark is the world to thee: thyself art the reason why;
For is He not all but that which has power to feel 'I am I'?

Glory about thee, without thee; and thou fulfillest thy doom
Making Him broken gleams, and a stifled splendor and gloom.

Speak to Him thou for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

God is law, say the wise; O Soul, and let us rejoice,
For if He thunder by law the thunder is yet His voice.

Law is God, say some: no God at all, says the fool;
For all we have power to see is a straight staff bent in a pool;

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man cannot see;
But if we could see and hear, this Vision—were it not He?

THE VOICE AND THE PEAK.

I.

THE voice and the Peak
Far over summit and lawn,
The lone glow and long roar
Green-rushing from the rosy thrones
of dawn!

II.

All night have I heard the voice
Rave over the rocky bar,
But thou wert silent in heaven,
Above thee glided the star.

III.

Hast thou no voice, O Peak,
That standest high above all?
'I am the voice of the Peak,
I roar and rave for I fall.

IV.

'A thousand voices go
To North, South, East, and West;
They leave the heights and are troub-
led,
And moan and sink to their rest.

V.

'The fields are fair beside them,
The chestnut towers in his bloom;
But they—they feel the desire of the
deep—
Fall, and follow their doom.

VI.

'The deep has power on the height,
And the height has power on the
deep;
They are raised for ever and ever,
And sink again into sleep.'

VII.

Not raised for ever and ever,
 But when their cycle is o'er,
 The valley, the voice, the peak, the
 star
 Pass, and are found no more.

VIII.

The Peak is high and flush'd
 At his highest with sunrise fire;
 The Peak is high, and the stars are
 high,
 And the thought of a man is higher.

IX.

A deep below the deep,
 And a height beyond the height!
 Our hearing is not hearing,
 And our seeing is not sight.

X.

The voice and the Peak
 Far into heaven withdrawn,
 The lone glow and long roar
 Green-rushing from the rosy thrones
 of dawn!

FLOWER in the crannied wall,
 I pluck you out of the crannies,
 I hold you here, root and all, in my
 hand,

Little flower—but *if* I could under-
 stand
 What you are, root and all, and all in
 all,
 I should know what God and man is.

A DEDICATION.

DEAR, near and true—no truer Time
 himself
 Can prove you, tho' he make you
 evermore
 Dearer and nearer, as the rapid of life
 Shoots to the fall—take this and pray
 that he
 Who wrote it, honoring your sweet
 faith in him,
 May trust himself; and after praise
 and scorn,
 As one who feels the immeasurable
 world,
 Attain the wise indifference of the
 wise;
 And after Autumn past—if left to pass
 His autumn into seeming-leafless
 days—
 Draw toward the long frost and long-
 est night,
 Wearing his wisdom lightly, like the
 fruit
 Which in our winter woodland looks
 a flower.¹

¹ The fruit of the Spindle-tree (*Euonymus Europæus*).

EXPERIMENTS.

BOADICEA.

WHILE about the shore of Mona those Neronian legionaries
 Burnt and broke the grove and altar of the Druid and Druidess,
 Far in the East Boadicea, standing loftily charioted,
 Mad and maddening all that heard her in her fierce volubility,
 Girt by half the tribes of Britain, near the colony Càmulodúne,
 Yell'd and shriek'd between her daughters o'er a wild confederacy.

'They that scorn the tribes and call us Britain's barbarous populaces,
 Did they hear me, would they listen, did they pity me supplicating?
 Shall I heed them in their anguish? shall I brook to be supplicated?
 Hear Icenian, Catieuchlanian, hear Coritanian, Trinobant!

Must their ever-ravening eagle's beak and talon annihilate us?
Tear the noble heart of Britain, leave it gorily quivering?
Bark an answer, Britain's raven! bark and blacken innumerable,
Blacken round the Roman carrion, make the carcase a skeleton,
Kite and kestrel, wolf and wolfin, from the wilderness, wallow in it,
Till the face of Bel be brighten'd, Taranis be propitiated.
Lo their colony half-defended! lo their colony, Cámulodúne!
There the horde of Roman robbers mock at a barbarous adversary.
There the hive of Roman liars worship an emperor-idiot.
Such is Rome, and this her deity: hear it, Spirit of Cássivëlaún!

‘Hear it, Gods! the Gods have heard it, O Icenian, O Coritanian!
Doubt not ye the Gods have answer'd, Catiëuchlanian, Trinobant.
These have told us all their anger in miraculous utterances,
Thunder, a flying fire in heaven, a murmur heard aërially,
Phantom sound of blows descending, moan of an enemy massacred,
Phantom wail of women and children, multitudinous agonies.
Bloodily flow'd the Tamesa rolling phantom bodies of horses and men;
Then a phantom colony smoulder'd on the reflux estuary;
Lastly yonder yester-even, suddenly giddily tottering—
There was one who watch'd and told me—down their statue of Victory fell.
Lo their precious Rman bantling, lo the colony Cámulodúne,
Shall we teach it a Roman lesson? shall we care to be pitiful?
Shall we deal with it as an infant? shall we dandle it amorously?

‘Hear Icenian, Catiëuchlanian, hear Coritanian, Trinobant!
While I roved about the forest, long and bitterly meditating,
There I heard them in the darkness, at the mystical ceremony,
Loosely robed in flying raiment, sang the terrible prophetesses,
“Fear not, isle of blowing woodland, isle of silvery parapets!
Tho' the Roman eagle shadow thee, tho' the gathering enemy narrow thee,
Thou shalt wax and he shall dwindle, thou shalt be the mighty one yet!
Thine the liberty, thine the glory, thine the deeds to be celebrated,
Thine the myriad-rolling ocean, light and shadow illimitable,
Thine the lands of lasting summer, many-blossoming Paradises,
Thine the North and thine the South and thine the battle-thunder of God,”
So they chanted: how shall Britain light upon auguries happier?
So they chanted in the darkness, and there cometh a victory now.

‘Hear Icenian, Catiëuchlanian, hear Coritanian, Trinobant!
Me the wife of rich Prasútagus, me the lover of liberty,
Me they seized and me they tortured, me they lash'd and humiliated,
Me the sport of ribald Veterans, mine of ruffian violators!
See they sit, they hide their faces, miserable in ignominy!
Wherefore in me burns an anger, not by blood to be satiated.
Lo the palaces and the temple, lo the colony Cámulodúne!
There they ruled, and thence they wasted all the flourishing territory,
Thither at their will they haled the yellow-ringed Britoness—
Bloodily, bloodily fall the battle-axe, unexhausted, inexorable.
Shout Icenian, Catiëuchlanian, shout Coritanian, Trinobant,
Till the victim hear within and yearn to hurry precipitously
Like the leaf in a roaring whirlwind, like the smoke in a hurricane whirl'd,
Lo the colony, there they rioted in the city of Cúnobelíne!

There they drank in cups of emerald, there at tables of ebony lay,
 Rolling on their purple couches in their tender effeminacy.
 There they dwelt and there they riot'd; there—there—they dwell no more.
 Burst the gates, and burn the palaces, break the works of the statuary,
 Take the hoary Roman head and shatter it, hold it abominable,
 Cut the Roman boy to pieces in his lust and voluptuousness,
 Lash the maiden into swooning, me they lash'd and humiliated,
 Chop the breasts from off the mother, dash the brains of the little one out,
 Up my Britons, on my chariot, on my chargers, trample them under us.'

So the Queen Boädicéa, standing loftily charioted,
 Brandishing in her hand a dart and rolling glances lioness-like,
 Yell'd and shriek'd between her daughters in her fierce volubility.
 Till her people all around the royal chariot agitated,
 Madly dash'd the darts together, writhing barbarous lincéments,
 Made the noise of frosty woodlands, when they shiver in January,
 Roar'd as when the roaring breakers boom and blanch on the precipices,
 Yell'd as when the winds of winter tear an oak on a promontory.
 So the silent colony hearing her tumultuous adversaries
 Clash the darts and on the buckler beat with rapid unanimous hand,
 Thought on all her evil tyrannies, all her pitiless avarice,
 Till she felt the heart within her fall and flutter tremulously,
 Then her pulses at the clamoring of her enemy fainted away.
 Out of evil evil flourishes, out of tyranny tyranny buds.
 Ran the land with Roman slaughter, multitudinous agonies.
 Perish'd many a maid and matron, many a valorous legionary,
 Fell the colony, city, and citadel, London, Verulam, Camulodüne.

IN QUANTITY.

ON TRANSLATIONS OF HOMER.

Hexameters and Pentameters.

THESE lame hexameters the strong-wing'd music of Homer!
 No—but a most burlesque barbarous experiment.
 When was a harsher sound ever heard, ye Muses, in England?
 When did a frog coarser croak upon our Helicon?
 Hexameters no worse than daring Germany gave us,
 Barbarous experiment, barbarous hexameters.

MILTON.

Alcaics.

O MIGHTY-MOUTH'D inventor of harmonies,
 O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,
 God-gifted organ-voice of England,
 Milton, a name to resound for ages;

Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,
 Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous armo-
 ries,
 Tower, as the deep-domed empyrean
 Rings to the roar of an angel on-
 set—
 Me rather all that bowery loneliness,
 The brooks of Eden mazily murmur-
 ing,

And bloom profuse and cedar arches
 Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,
 Where some refulgent sunset of India
 Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean
 isle,
 And crimson-hued the stately palm-
 woods
 Whisper in odorous heights of
 even.

Hendecasyllabics.

O you chorus of indolent reviewers,
 Irresponsible, indolent reviewers,
 Look, I come to the test, a tiny poem
 All composed in a metre of Catullus,
 All in quantity, careful of my mo-
 tion,
 Like the skater on ice that hardly
 bears him,
 Lest I fall unawares before the peo-
 ple,
 Waking laughter in indolent review-
 ers.
 Should I flounder awhile without a
 tumble
 Thro' this metrification of Catullus,
 They should speak to me not with-
 out a welcome,
 All that chorus of indolent review-
 ers.
 Hard, hard, hard is it, only not to
 tumble,
 So fantastical is the dainty metre.
 Wherefore slight me not wholly, nor
 believe me
 Too presumptuous, indolent review-
 ers.
 O blatant Magazines, regard me
 rather—
 Since I blush to belaud myself a mo-
 ment—
 As some rare little rose, a piece of in-
 most
 Horticultural art, or half coquette-
 like
 Maiden, not to be greeted unbenign-
 ly.

SPECIMEN OF A TRANSLA-
 TION OF THE ILIAD IN
 BLANK VERSE.

So Hector spake; the Trojans roar'd
 applause;
 Then loosed their sweating horses
 from the yoke,
 And each beside his chariot bound his
 own;
 And oxen from the city, and goodly
 sheep
 In haste they drove, and honey-hearted
 wine
 And bread from out the houses
 brought, and heap'd
 Their firewood, and the winds from off
 the plain
 Roll'd the rich vapor far into the
 heaven.
 And these all night upon the bridge¹
 of war
 Sat glorying; many a fire before them
 blazed:
 As when in heaven the stars about the
 moon
 Look beautiful, when all the winds are
 laid,
 And every height comes out, and jut-
 ting peak
 And valley, and the immeasurable
 heavens
 Break open to their highest, and all
 the stars
 Shine, and the Shepherd gladdens in
 his heart:
 So many a fire between the ships and
 stream
 Of Xanthus blazed before the towers
 of Troy,
 A thousand on the plain; and close by
 each
 Sat fifty in the blaze of burning fire;
 And eating hoary grain and pulse the
 steeds
 Fixt by their cars, waited the golden
 dawn.

Iliad VIII. 542-561.

¹ Or, ridge.

THE WINDOW; OR, THE SONG OF THE WRENS.

FOUR years ago Mr. Sullivan requested me to write a little song-cycle, German fashion, for him to exercise his art upon. He had been very successful in setting such old songs as 'Orpheus with his lute,' and I drest up for him, partly in the old style, a puppet, whose almost only merit is, perhaps, that it can dance to Mr. Sullivan's instrument. I am sorry that my four-year-old puppet should have to dance at all in the dark shadow of these days; but the music is now completed, and I am bound by my promise.

December, 1870.

A. TENNYSON.

THE WINDOW.

ON THE HILL.

THE lights and shadows fly!
Yonder it brightens and darkens down
on the plain.

A jewel, a jewel dear to a lover's
eye!
Oh is it the brook, or a pool, or her
window pane,
When the winds are up in the
morning?

Clouds that are racing above,
And winds and lights and shadows
that cannot be still,
All running on one way to the home
of my love,
You are all running on, and I stand
on the slope of the hill,
And the winds are up in the
morning!

Follow, follow the chase!
And my thoughts are as quick and as
quick, ever on, on, on.
O lights, are you flying over her
sweet little face?
And my heart is there before you are
come, and gone,
When the winds are up in the
morning!

Follow them down the slope!
And I follow them down to the win-
dow-pane of my dear,
And it brightens and darkens and
brightens like my hope,

And it darkens and brightens and
darkens like my fear,
And the winds are up in the
morning.

AT THE WINDOW.

Vine, vine and eglantine,
Clasp her window, trail and twine!
Rose, rose and clematis,
Trail and twine and clasp and kiss,
Kiss, kiss; and make her a bower
All of flowers, and drop me a
flower,
Drop me a flower.

Vine, vine and eglantine,
Cannot a flower, a flower be mine?
Rose, rose and clematis,
Drop me a flower, a flower, to kiss,
Kiss, kiss—and out of her bower
All of flowers, a flower, a flower,
Dropt, a flower.

GONE.

Gone!
Gone, till the end of the year,
Gone, and the light gone with her,
and left me in shadow here!
Gone—flitted away,
Taken the stars from the night and
the sun from the day!
Gone, and a cloud in my heart, and a
storm in the air!
Flown to the east or the west, flitted
I know not where!
Down in the south is a flash and a
groan: she is there! she is
there!

WINTER.

The frost is here,
And fuel is dear,
And woods are sear,
And fires burn clear,
And frost is here
And has bitten the heel of the going
year.

Bite, frost, bite !
You roll up away from the light
The blue wood-louse, and the plump
dormouse,
And the bees are still'd, and the flies
are kill'd,
And you bite far into the heart of the
house,
But not into mine.

Bite, frost, bite !
The woods are all the searer,
The fuel is all the dearer,
The fires are all the clearer,
My spring is all the nearer,
You have bitten into the heart of the
earth,
But not into mine.

SPRING.

Birds' love and birds' song
Flying here and there,
Birds' song and birds' love,
And you with gold for hair !
Birds' song and birds' love,
Passing with the weather,
Men's song and men's love,
To love once and for ever.

Men's love and bird's love,
And women's love and men's !
And you my wren with a crown of
gold,
You my queen of the wrens !
You the queen of the wrens—
We'll be birds of a feather,
I'll be King of the Queen of the
wrens,
And all in a nest together.

THE LETTER.

Where is another sweet as my sweet,
Fine of the fine, and shy of the shy ?
Fine little hands, fine little feet—
Dewy blue eye.
Shall I write to her ? shall I go ?
Ask her to marry me by and by ?
Somebody said that she'd say no ;
Somebody knows that she'll say ay !

Ay or no, if ask'd to her face ?
Ay or no, from shy of the shy ?
Go, little letter, apace, apace,
Fly ;
Fly to the light in the valley below—
Tell my wish to her dewy blue eye :
Somebody said that she'd say no ;
Somebody knows that she'll say ay !

NO ANSWER.

The mist and the rain, the mist and
the rain !
Is it ay or no ? is it ay or no ?
And never a glimpse of her window
pane !
And I may die but the grass will
grow,
And the grass will grow when I am
gone,
And the wet west wind and the world
will go on.
Ay is the song of the wedded spheres,
No is trouble and cloud and storm,
Ay is life for a hundred years,
No will push me down to the
worm,
And when I am there and dead and
gone,
The wet west wind and the world
will go on.

The wind and the wet, the wind and
the wet !
Wet west wind how you blow, you
blow !
And never a line from my lady yet !
Is it ay or no ? is it ay or no ?
Blow then, blow, and when I am gone,
The wet west wind and the world
may go on.

NO ANSWER.

Winds are loud and you are dumb,
Take my love, for love will come,

Love will come but once a life.

Winds are loud and winds will pass !
Spring is here with leaf and grass :

Take my love and be my wife.

After-loves of maids and men

Are but dainties drest again :

Love me now, you'll love me then :

Love can love but once a life.

THE ANSWER.

Two little hands that meet,

Claspt on her seal, my sweet !

Must I take you and break you,

Two little hands that meet ?

I must take you, and break you,

And loving hands must part—

Take, take—break, break—

Break—you may break my heart.

Faint heart never won—

Break, break, and all's done.

AY.

Be merry, all birds, to-day,

Be merry on earth as you never
were merry before,

Be merry in heaven, O larks, and far
away,

And merry for ever and ever, and
one day more.

Why ?

For it's easy to find a rhyme.

Look, look, how he flits,

The fire-crown'd king of the wrens,
from out of the pine !

Look how they tumble the blossom,
the mad little tits !

'Cuck-oo ! Cuck-oo !' was ever a
May so fine ?

Why ?

For it's easy to find a rhyme.

O merry the linnet and dove,

And swallow and sparrow and
thristle, and have your desire !

O merry my heart, you have gotten
the wings of love,

And flit like the king of the wrens
with a crown of fire.

Why ?

For it's ay ay, ay ay.

WHEN.

Sun comes, moon comes,

Time slips away.

Sun sets, moon sets,

Love, fix a day.

'A year hence, a year hence.'

'We shall both be gray.'

'A month hence, a month hence.'

'Far, far away.'

'A week hence, a week hence.'

'Ah, the long delay.'

'Wait a little, wait a little,

You shall fix a day.'

'To-morrow, love, to-morrow,

And that's an age away.'

Blaze upon her window, sun,

And honor all the day.

MARRIAGE MORNING.

Light, so low upon earth,

You send a flash to the sun.

Here is the golden close of love,

All my wooing is done.

Oh, the woods and the meadows,

Woods where we hid from the wet,

Stiles where we stay'd to be kind,

Meadows in which we met !

Light, so low in the vale

You flash and lighten afar,

For this is the golden morning of
love,

And you are his morning star.

Flash, I am coming, I come,

By meadow and stile and wood,

Oh, lighten into my eyes and my
heart,

Into my heart and my blood !

Heart, are you great enough

For a love that never tires ?

O heart, are you great enough for
love ?

I have heard of thorns and briers.

Over the thorns and briers,

Over the meadows and stiles,

Over the world to the end of it

Flash for a million miles.

IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII.

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen
thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove ;

Thine are these orbs of light and
shade ;
Thou madest Life in man and
brute ;
Thou madest Death ; and lo, thy
foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust :
Thou madest man, he knows not
why,
He thinks he was not made to die ;
And thou hast made him : thou art
just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood,
thou :
Our wills are ours, we know not
how ;
Our wills are ours, to make them
thine.

Our little systems have their day ;
They have their day and cease to
be :
They are but broken lights of
thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith : we cannot know ;
For knowledge is of things we
see ;
And yet we trust it comes from
thee,
A beam in darkness : let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to
more,
But more of reverence in us dwell ;
That mind and soul, according
well,
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight ;
We mock thee when we do not
fear :
But help thy foolish ones to bear ;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me ;
What seem'd my worth since I
began ;
For merit lives from man to
man,
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature, whom I found so
fair.
I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering
cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth ;
Forgive them where they fail in
truth,
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

1849.

I.

I HELD it truth, with him who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones,
That men may rise on stepping-
stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years
And find in loss a gain to match ?
Or reach a hand thro' time to
catch
The far-off interest of tears ?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be
drown'd,
Let darkness keep her raven
gloss :
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with
loss,
To dance with death, to beat the
ground,

Than that the victor Hours should
scorn
The long result of love, and boast,
'Behold the man that loved and
lost,
But all he was is overworn.'

II.

Old Yew, which graspest at the stones
That name the under-lying dead,
Thy fibres net the 'dreamless
head,
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,
And bring the firstling to the
flock;
And in the dusk of thee, the clock
Beats out the little lives of men.

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,
Who changest not in any gale,
Nor branding summer suns avail
To touch thy thousand years of gloom:

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,
I seem to fail from out my blood
And grow incorporate into thee.

III.

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,
O Priestess in the vaults of
Death,
O sweet and bitter in a breath,
What whispers from thy lying lip?

'The stars,' she whispers, blindly
run;
A web is wov'n across the sky;
From out waste places comes a
cry,
And murmurs from the dying sun:

'And all the phantom, Nature,
stands—
With all the music in her tone,
A hollow echo of my own,—
A hollow form with empty hands.'

And shall I take a thing so blind,
Embrace her as my natural good;

Or crush her, like a vice of blood,
Upon the threshold of the mind?

IV.

To Sleep I give my powers away;
My will is bondsman to the dark;
I sit within a helmless bark,
And with my heart I muse and say:

O heart, how fares it with thee now,
That thou should'st fail from thy
desire,
Who scarcely darest to inquire,
'What is it makes me beat so low?'

Something it is which thou hast lost,
Some pleasure from 'thine early
years.
Break, thou deep vase of chilling
tears,
That grief hath shaken into frost!

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross
All night below the darken'd
eyes;
With morning wakes the will,
and cries,
'Thou shalt not be the fool of loss.'

V.

I sometimes hold it half a sin
To put in words the grief I feel;
For words, like Nature, half
reveal
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
A use in measured language lies;
The sad mechanic exercise,
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,
Like coarsest clothes against the
cold:
But that large grief which these
enfold
Is given in outline and no more.

VI.

One writes, that 'Other friends
remain,'

That 'Loss is common to the
race'—
And common is the common-
place,
And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make
My own less bitter, rather more:
Too common! Never morning
wore
To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,
Who pledgedst now thy gallant
son;
A shot, ere half thy draught be
done,
Hath still'd the life that beat from
thee.

O mother, praying God will save
Thy sailor,—while thy head is
bow'd,
His heavy-shotted hammock-
shroud
Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought
At that last hour to please him
well;
Who mused on all I had to tell,
And something written, something
thought;

Expecting still his advent home;
And ever met him on his way
With wishes, thinking, 'here to-
day,'
Or 'here to-morrow will he come.'

O somewhere, meek, unconscious
dove,
That sittest ranging golden hair;
And glad to find thyself so fair,
Poor child, that waitest for thy love!

For now her father's chimney glows
In expectation of a guest;
And thinking 'this will please
him best,'
She takes a riband or a rose;

For he will see them on to-night;
And with the thought her color
burns;
And, having left the glass, she
turns
Once more to set a ringlet right;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse
Had fallen, and her future Lord
Was drown'd in passing thro' the
ford,
Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O what to her shall be the end?
And what to me remains of good?
To her, perpetual maidenhood,
And unto me no second friend.

VII.

Dark house, by which once more I
stand
Here in the long unlovely street,
Doors, where my heart was used
to beat
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more—
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
And like a guilty thing I creep
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away
The noise of life begins again,
And ghastly thro' the drizzling
rain
On the bald street breaks the blank
day.

VIII.

A happy lover who has come
To look on her that loves him
well,
Who 'lights and rings the gate-
way bell,
And learns her gone and far from
home;

He saddens, all the magic light
Dies off at once from bower and
hall,
And all the place is dark, and all
The chambers emptied of delight:

So find I every pleasant spot
 In which we two were wont to
 meet,
 The field, the chamber and the
 street,
 For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there
 In those deserted walks, may find
 A flower beat with rain and wind,
 Which once she foster'd up with care;

So seems it in my deep regret,
 O my forsaken heart, with thee
 And this poor flower of poesy
 Which little cared for fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,
 I go to plant it on his tomb,
 That if it can it there may bloom,
 Or dying, there at least may die.

IX.

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore
 Sail'st the placid ocean-plains
 With my lost Arthur's loved re-
 mains,
 Spread thy full wings, and waft him
 o'er.

So draw him home to those that
 mourn
 In vain; a favorable speed
 Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead
 Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex
 Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor,
 bright
 As our pure love, thro' early light
 Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above;
 Sleep, gentle heavens, before the
 prow;
 Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps
 now,

My friend, the brother of my love;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see
 Till all my widow'd race be run;
 Dear as the mother to the son,
 More than my brothers are to me.

X.

I hear the noise about thy keel;
 I hear the bell struck in the night;
 I see the cabin-window bright;
 I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,
 And travell'd men from foreign
 lands;
 And letters unto trembling hands;
 And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.

So bring him: we have idle dreams:
 This look of quiet flatters thus
 Our home-bred fancies: O to us,
 The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,
 That takes the sunshine and the
 rains,
 Or where the kneeling hamlet
 drains

The chalice of the grapes of God;

Than if with thee the roaring wells
 Should gulf him fathom-deep in
 brine;
 And hands so often clasp'd in
 mine,
 Should toss with tangle and with
 shells.

XI.

Calm is the morn without a sound,
 Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
 And only thro' the faded leaf
 The chestnut pattering to the ground:

Calm and deep peace on this high
 wold,
 And on these dews that drench
 the furze,
 And all the silvery gossamers
 That twinkle into green and gold:

Calm and still light on yon great plain
 That sweeps with all its autumn
 bowers,
 And crowded farms and lessening
 towers,
 To mingle with the bounding main:

Calm and deep peace in this wide
air,
These leaves that redden to the
fall;
And in my heart, if calm at all,
If any calm, a calm despair :

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
And waves that sway themselves
in rest,
And dead calm in that noble
breast
Which heaves but with the heaving
deep.

XII.

Lo, as a dove when up she springs
To bear thro' Heaven a tale of
woe,
Some dolorous message knit be-
low
The wild pulsation of her wings ;

Like her I go ; I cannot stay ;
I leave this mortal ark behind,
A weight of nerves without a
mind,
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,
And reach the glow of southern
skies,
And see the sails at distance rise,
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying ; ' Comes he thus, my
friend ?
Is this the end of all my care ? '
And circle moaning in the air :
' Is this the end ? Is this the end ? '

And forward dart again, and play
About the prow, and back return
To where the body sits, and learn
That I have been an hour away.

XIII.

Tears of the widower, when he sees
A late-lost form that sleep reveals,
And moves his doubtful arms,
and feels
Her place is empty, fall like these ;

Which weep a loss forever new,
A void where heart on heart re-
posed ;
And, where warm hands have
prest and closed,
Silence, till I be silent too.

Which weep the comrade of my
choice,
An awful thought, a life removed,
The human-hearted man I loved,
A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come Time, and teach me, many
years,
I do not suffer in a dream ;
For now so strange do these
things seem,
Mine eyes have leisure for their tears ;

My fancies time to rise on wing,
And glance about the approach-
ing sails,
As tho' they brought but mer-
chants' bales,
And not the burthen that they bring.

XIV.

If one should bring me this report,
That thou hadst touch'd the land
to-day,
And I went down unto the quay,
And found thee lying in the port ;

And standing, muffled round with woe,
Should see thy passengers in rank
Come stepping lightly down the
plank,
And beckoning unto those they know ;

And if along with these should come
The man I held as half-divine ;
Should strike a sudden hand in
mine,
And ask a thousand things of home ;

And I should tell him all my pain,
And how my life had droop'd of
late,
And he should sorrow o'er my
state
And marvel what possess'd my brain ;

And I perceived no touch of change,
 No hint of death in all his frame,
 But found him all in all the same,
 I should not feel it to be strange.

XV.

To-night the winds begin to rise
 And roar from yonder dropping
 day:

The last red leaf is whirl'd away,
 The rooks are blown about the skies;

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,
 The cattle huddled on the lea;
 And wildly dash'd on tower and
 tree

The sunbeam strikes along the world:

And but for fancies, which aver
 That all thy motions gently pass
 Athwart a plane of molten glass,
 I scarce could brook the strain and
 stir

That makes the barren branches loud;
 And but for fear it is not so,
 The wild unrest that lives in woe
 Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,
 And onward drags a laboring
 breast,
 And topples round the dreary west,
 A looming bastion fringed with fire.

XVI.

What words are these have fall'n
 from me?
 Can calm despair and wild un-
 rest

Be tenants of a single breast,
 Or sorrow such a changeling be?

Or doth she only seem to take
 The touch of change in calm or
 storm;

But knows no more of transient
 form
 In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark
 Hung in the shadow of a heaven?

Or has the shock, so harshly given,
 Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,
 And staggers blindly ere she sink?
 And stunn'd me from my power
 to think

And all my knowledge of myself;

And mad'd me that delirious man
 Whose fancy fuses old and new,
 And flashes into false and true,
 And mingles all without a plan?

XVII.

Thou comest, much wept for: such a
 breeze
 Compell'd thy canvas, and my
 prayer
 Was as the whisper of an air
 To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move
 Thro' circles of the bounding sky,
 Week after week: the days go
 by:
 Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou may'st
 roam,
 My blessing, like a line of light,
 Is on the waters day and night,
 And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars
 Mid-ocean, spare thee, sacred
 bark;
 And balmy drops in summer dark
 Slide from the bosom of the stars.

So kind an office hath been done,
 Such precious relics brought by
 thee;
 The dust of him I shall not see
 Till all my widow'd race be run.

XVIII.

'Tis well; 'tis something; we may
 stand
 Where he in English earth is laid,
 And from his ashes may be made
 The violet of his native land.

'Tis little ; but it looks in truth
As if the quiet bones were blest
Among familiar names to rest
And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the
head
That sleeps or wears the mask
of sleep,
And come, whatever loves to
weep,
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,
I, falling on his faithful heart,
Would breathing thro' his lips
impart
The life that almost dies in me ;

That dies not, but endures with pain,
And slowly forms the firmer
mind,
Treasuring the look it cannot
find,
The words that are not heard again.

XIX.

The Danube to the Severn gave
The darken'd heart that beat no
more ;
They laid him by the pleasant
shore,
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills ;
The salt sea-water passes by,
And hushes half the babbling
Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,
And hush'd my deepest grief of
all,
When fill'd with tears that can-
not fall,
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again
Is vocal in its wooded walls ;
My deeper anguish also falls,
And I can speak a little then.

XX.

The lesser griefs that may be said,
That breathe a thousand tender
vows,
Are but as servants in a house
Where lies the master newly dead ;

Who speak their feeling as it is,
And weep the fulness from the
mind :
'It will be hard,' they say, 'to find
Another service such as this.'

My lighter moods are like to these,
That out of words a comfort win ;
But there are other griefs within,
And tears that at their fountain
freeze ;

For by the hearth the children sit
Cold in that atmosphere of Death,
And scarce endure to draw the
breath,
Or like to noiseless phantoms flit :

But open converse is there none,
So much the vital spirits sink
To see the vacant chair, and
think,
'How good ! how kind ! and he is
gone.'

XXI.

I sing to him that rests below,
And, since the grasses round me
wave,
I take the grasses of the grave,
And make them pipes whereon to
blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,
And sometimes harshly will he
speak :
'This fellow would make weak-
ness weak,
And melt the waxen hearts of men.'

Another answers, 'Let him be,
He loves to make parade of pain,
That with his piping he may
gain
The praise that comes to constancy.'

A third is wroth: 'Is this an hour
For private sorrow's barren song,
When more and more the people
throng
The chairs and thrones of civil
power?

'A time to sicken and to swoon,
When Science reaches forth her
arms
To feel from world to world, and
charms
Her secret from the latest moon?'

Behold, ye speak an idle thing:
Ye never knew the sacred dust:
I do but sing because I must,
And pipe but as the linnets sing:

And one is glad; her note is gay,
For now her little ones have
ranged;
And one is sad; her note is
changed,
Because her brood is stol'n away.

XXII.

The path by which we twain did go,
Which led by tracts that pleased
us well,
Thro' four sweet years arose and
fell,
From flower to flower, from snow to
snow:

And we with singing cheer'd the way,
And, crown'd with all the season
lent,
From April on to April went,
And glad at heart from May to May:

But where the path we walk'd began
To slant the fifth autumnal slope,
As we descended following Hope,
There sat the Shadow fear'd of man;

Who broke our fair companionship,
And spread his mantle dark and
cold,
And wrapt thee formless in the
fold,
And dull'd the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see
Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste,
And think, that somewhere in
the waste
The Shadow sits and waits for me.

XXIII.

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,
Or breaking into song by fits,
Alone, alone, to where he sits,
The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,
I wander, often falling lame,
And looking back to whence I
came,
Or on to where the pathway leads;

And crying, How changed from
where it ran
Thro' lands where not a leaf was
dumb;
But all the lavish hills would hum
The murmur of a happy Pan:

When each by turns was guide to
each,
And Fancy light from Fancy
caught,
And Thought leapt out to wed with
Thought
Ere Thought could wed itself with
Speech;

And all we met was fair and good,
And all was good that Time
could bring,
And all the secret of the Spring
Moved in the chambers of the blood;

And many an old philosophy
On Argive heights divinely sang,
And round us all the thickest rang
To many a flute of Arcady.

XXIV.

And was the day of my delight
As pure and perfect as I say?
The very source and fount of
Day
Is dash'd with wandering isles of
night.



"I WITH MINE AFFIANCED."—Page 52.

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If all was good and fair we met,
This earth had been the Paradise
It never look'd to human eyes
Since our first Sun arose and set.

And is it that the haze of grief
Makes former gladness loom so
great?

The lowness of the present state,
That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win
A glory from its being far;
And orb into the perfect star
We saw not, when we moved therein?

XXV.

I know that this was Life,—the track
Whereon with equal feet we
fared;
And then, as now, the day pre-
pared
The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move
As light as carrier-birds in air;
I love the weight I had to bear,
Because it needed help of Love:

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,
When mighty Love would cleave
in twain
The lading of a single pain,
And part it, giving half to him.

XXVI.

Still onward winds the dreary way;
I with it; for I long to prove
No lapse of moons can canker
Love,
Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt
And goodness, and hath power to
see
Within the green the moulder'd
tree,
And towers fall'n as soon as built—

Oh, if indeed that eye foresee
Or see (in Him is no before)
In more of life true life no more
And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find, ere yet the morn
Breaks hither over Indian seas,
That Shadow waiting with the
keys,
To shroud me from my proper scorn.

XXVII.

I envy not in any moods
The captive void of noble rage,
The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods:

I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
The heart that never plighted
troth
But stagnates in the weeds of
sloth;
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
I feel it, when I sorrow most;
'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

XXVIII.

The time draws near the birth of
Christ:
The moon is hid; the night is
still;
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
From far and near, on mead and
moor,
Swell out and fail, as if a door
Were shut between me and the
sound:

Each voice four changes on the wind,
That now dilate, and now decrease,
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and
peace,
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,
I almost wish'd no more to wake,

And that my hold on life would
break
Before I heard those bells again :
But they my troubled spirit rule,
For they controll'd me when a
boy ;
They bring me sorrow touch'd
with joy,
The merry merry bells of Yule.

XXIX.

With such compelling cause to grieve
As daily vexes household peace,
And chains regret to his decease,
How dare we keep our Christmas-eve ;

Which brings no more a welcome
guest
To enrich the threshold of the
night
With shower'd largess of delight
In dance and song and game and
jest ?

Yet go, and while the holly boughs
Entwine the cold baptismal font,
Make one wreath more for Use
and Wont,
That guard the portals of the house ;

Old sisters of a day gone by,
Gray nurses, loving nothing new ;
Why should they miss their
yearly due
Before their time ? They too will
die.

XXX.

With trembling fingers did we weave
The holly round the Christmas
hearth ;
A rainy cloud possess'd the
earth,
And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall
We gambol'd, making vain
pretence
Of gladness, with an awful sense
Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused : the winds were in the
beech :

We heard them sweep the winter
land ;

And in a circle hand-in-hand
Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang ;
We sung, tho' every eye was dim,
A merry song we sang with him
Last year : impetuously we sang :

We ceased : a gentler feeling crept
Upon us : surely rest is meet :
' They rest,' we said, ' their sleep
is sweet,'

And silence follow'd, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range ;
Once more we sang : ' They do
not die
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
Nor change to us, although they
change ;

' Rapt from the fickle and the frail
With gather'd power, yet the
same,
Pierces the keen seraphic flame
From orb to orb, from veil to veil.'

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,
Draw forth the cheerful day from
night :

O Father, touch the east, and
light

The light that shone when Hope was
born.

XXXI.

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
And home to Mary's house
return'd,

Was this demanded—if he
yearn'd

To hear her weeping by his grave ?

' Where wert thou, brother, those
four days ?'

There lives nore cord of reply,
Which telling what it is to die
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbors met,
 The streets were fill'd with
 joyful sound,
 A solemn gladness even crown'd
 The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ !
 The rest remaineth unreveal'd ;
 He told it not ; or something
 seal'd
 The lips of that Evangelist.

XXXII.

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,
 Nor other thought her mind
 admits
 But, he was dead, and there he
 sits,
 And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede
 All other, when her ardent gaze
 Roves from the living brother's
 face,
 And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,
 Borne down by gladness so com-
 plete,
 She bows, she bathes the Sa-
 viour's feet
 With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful
 prayers,
 Whose loves in higher love
 endure ;
 What souls possess themselves
 so pure,
 Or is there blessedness like theirs ?

XXXIII.

O thou that after toil and storm
 Mayst seem to have reach'd a
 purer air,
 Whose faith has centre every-
 where,
 Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister when she prays,
 Her early Heaven, her happy
 views ;

Nor thou with shadow'd hint
 confuse
 A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,
 Her hands are quicker unto good :
 Oh, sacred be the flesh and
 blood
 To which she links a truth divine !

See thou, that countest reason ripe
 In holding by the law within,
 Thou fail not in a world of sin,
 And ev'n for want of such a type.

XXXIV.

My own dim life should teach me this,
 That life shall live for evermore,
 Else earth is darkness at the
 core,
 And dust and ashes all that is ;

This round of green, this orb of
 flame,
 Fantastic beauty ; such as lurks
 In some wild Poet, when he
 works
 Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I ?
 'Twere hardly worth my while to
 choose
 Of things all mortal, or to use
 A little patience ere I die ;

'Twere best at once to sink to peace,
 Like birds the charming serpent
 draws,
 To drop head-foremost in the
 jaws
 Of vacant darkness and to cease.

XXXV.

Yet if some voice that man could trust
 Should murmur from the narrow
 house,
 'The cheeks drop in ; the body
 bows ;
 Man dies : nor is there hope in dust :'

Might I not say ? ' Yet even here,
 But for one hour, O Love, I strive

To keep so sweet a thing alive :'
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,
The sound of streams that swift
or slow
Draw down Æonian hills, and sow
The dust of continents to be ;

And Love would answer with a sigh,
'The sound of that forgetful shore
Will change my sweetness more
and more,
Half-dead to know that I shall die.'

O me, what profits it to put
An idle case ? If Death were seen
At first as Death, Love had not
been,
Or been in narrowest working shut,

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,
Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape
Had bruised the herb and crush'd
the grape,
And bask'd and batten'd in the woods.

XXXVI.

Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
We yield all blessing to the name
Of Him that made them current coin ;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
Where truth in closest words
shall fail,
When truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and
wrought
With human hands the creed of
creeds

In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought ;

Which he may read that binds the
sheaf,
Or builds the house, or digs the
grave,

And those wild eyes that watch
the wave
In roarings round the coral reef.

XXXVII.

Urania speaks with darken'd brow :
'Thou pratest here where thou
art least ;

This faith has many a purer priest,
And many an abler voice than thou.

'Go down beside thy native rill,
On thy Parnassus set thy feet,
And hear thy laurel whisper sweet
About the ledges of the hill.'

And my Melpomene replies,
A touch of shame upon her cheek :
'I am not worthy ev'n to speak
Of thy prevailing mysteries ;

'For I am but an earthly Muse,
And owing but a little art
To lull with song an aching heart,
And render human love his dues ;

'But brooding on the dear one dead,
And all he said of things divine,
(And dear to me as sacred wine
To dying lips is all he said),

'I murmur'd, as I came along,
Of comfort clasp'd in truth re-
veal'd ;
And loiter'd in the master's field,
And darken'd sanctities with song.'

XXXVIII.

With weary steps I loiter on,
Tho' always under alter'd skies
The purple from the distance dies,
My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,
The herald melodies of spring,
But in the songs I love to sing
A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here
Survive in spirits render'd free,
Then are these songs I sing of thee
Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

XXXIX.

Old warder of these buried bones,
And answering now my random
stroke

With fruitful cloud and living
smoke,
Dark yew, that graspest at the stones

And dippest toward the dreamless
head,
To thee too comes the golden
hour
When flower is feeling after
flower;
But Sorrow—fixt upon the dead,

And darkening the dark graves of
men,—
What whisper'd from her lying
lips?
Thy gloom is kindled at the tips,
And passes into gloom again.

XL.

Could we forget the widow'd hour
And look on Spirits breathed
away,
As on a maiden in the day
When first she wears her orange-
flower!

When crown'd with blessing she doth
rise
To take her latest leave of home,
And hopes and light regrets that
come
Make April of her tender eyes;

And doubtful joys the father move,
And tears are on the mother's
face,
As parting with a long embrace
She enters other realms of love;

Her office there to rear, to teach,
Becoming as is meet and fit
A link among the days, to knit
The generations each with each;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given
A life that bears immortal fruit
In those great offices that suit
The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern!
How often shall her old fireside

Be cheer'd with tidings of the
bride,
How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,
And bring her babe, and make her
boast,
Till even those that miss'd her
most
Shall count new things as dear as old:

But thou and I have shaken hands,
Till growing winters lay me low;
My paths are in the fields I know,
And thine in undiscover'd lands.

XLI.

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss
Did ever rise from high to higher;
As mounts the heavenward altar-
fire,
As flies the lighter thro' the gross.

But thou art turn'd to something
strange,
And I have lost the links that
bound
Thy changes; here upon the
ground,
No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly! yet that this could be—
That I could wing my will with
might
To leap the grades of life and
light,
And flash at once, my friend, to thee.

For tho' my nature rarely yields
To that vague fear implied in
death;
Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,
The howlings from forgotten fields;

Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor
An inner trouble I behold,
A spectral doubt which makes me
cold,
That I shall be thy mate no more,

Tho' following with an upward mind
The wonders that have come to
thee,

Thro' all the secular to-be,
But evermore a life behind.

XLII.

I vex my heart with fancies dim :
He still outstript me in the race ;
It was but unity of place
That made me dream I rank'd with him.

And so may Place retain us still,
And he the much-beloved again,
A lord of large experience, train
To ripper growth the mind and will :

And what delights can equal those
That stir the spirit's inner deeps,
When one that loves but knows
not, reaps
A truth from one that loves and
knows ?

XLIII.

If Sleep and Death be truly one,
And every spirit's folded bloom
Thro' all its intervital gloom
In some long trance should slumber
on ;

Unconscious of the sliding hour,
Bare of the body, might it last,
And silent traces of the past
Be all the color of the flower :

So then were nothing lost to man ;
So that still garden of the souls
In many a figured leaf enrolls
The total world since life began ;

And love will last as pure and whole
As when he loved me here in
Time,
And at the spiritual prime
Rewaken with the dawning soul.

XLIV.

How fares it with the happy dead ?
For here the man is more and
more ;
But he forgets the days before
God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanish'd, tone and tint,
And yet perhaps the hoarding
sense

Gives out at times (he knows not
whence)

A little flash, a mystic hint ;

And in the long harmonious years
(If Death so taste Lethean
springs),

May some dim touch of earthly
things

Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

If such a dreamy touch should fall,
O turn thee round, resolve the
doubt ;

My guardian angel will speak out
In that high place, and tell thee all.

XLV.

The baby new to earth and sky,
What time his tender palm is
prest

Against the circle of the breast,
Has never thought that 'this is I :'

But as he grows he gathers much,
And learns the use of 'I,' and
'me,'

And finds 'I am not what I see,
And other than the things I touch.'

So rounds he to a separate mind
From whence clear memory may
begin,

As thro' the frame that binds him
in

His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,
Which else were fruitless of their
due,

Had man to learn himself anew
Beyond the second birth of Death.

XLVI.

We ranging down this lower track,
The path we came by, thorn and
flower,

Is shadow'd by the growing hour,
Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it: there no shade can last
 In that deep dawn behind the
 tomb,
 But clear from marge to marge
 shall bloom
 The eternal landscape of the past ;

A lifelong tract of time reveal'd ;
 The fruitful hours of still in-
 crease ;
 Days order'd in a wealthy peace,
 And those five years its richest field.

O Love, thy province were not large,
 A bounded field, nor stretching
 far ;
 Look also, Love, a brooding star,
 A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

XLVII.

That each, who seems a separate
 whole,
 Should move his rounds, and
 fusing all
 The skirts of self again, should
 fall
 Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet :
 Eternal form shall still divide
 The eternal soul from all beside ;
 And I shall know him when we meet :

And we shall sit at endless feast,
 Enjoying each the other's good :
 What vaster dream can hit the
 mood
 Of Love on earth? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,
 Before the spirits fade away,
 Some landing-place, to clasp and
 say,
 ' Farewell ! We lose ourselves in light.'

XLVIII.

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,
 Were taken to be such as closed
 Grave doubts and answers here
 proposed,
 Then these were such as men might
 scorn :

Her care is not to part and prove ;
 She takes, when harsher moods
 remit,
 What slender shade of doubt
 may flit,
 And makes it vassal unto love :

And hence, indeed, she sports with
 words,
 But better serves a wholesome
 law,
 And holds it sin and shame to
 draw
 The deepest measure from the chords :

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,
 But rather loosens from the lip
 Short swallow-flights of song,
 that dip
 Their wings in tears, and skim away.

XLIX.

From art, from nature, from the
 schools,
 Let random influences glance,
 Like light in many a shiver'd
 lance
 That breaks about the dappled pools :

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,
 The fancy's tenderest eddy
 wreathe,
 The slightest air of song shall
 breathe
 To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,
 But blame not thou the winds
 that make
 The seeming-wanton ripple break,
 The tender-pencil'd shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears
 Ay me, the sorrow deepens down,
 Whose muffled motions blindly
 drown
 The bases of my life in tears.

L.

Be near me when my light is low,
 When the blood creeps, and the
 nerves prick

And tingle; and the heart is sick,
And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame
Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust;

And Time, a maniac scattering dust,
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,
And men the flies of latter spring,
That lay their eggs, and sting
and sing
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,
To point the term of human strife,
And on the low dark verge of life
The twilight of eternal day.

LI.

Do we indeed desire the dead
Should still be near us at our side?

Is there no baseness we would hide?
No inner vileness that we dread?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,
I had such reverence for his blame,
See with clear eye some hidden shame
And I be lessen'd in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue;
Shall love be blamed for want of faith?
There must be wisdom with great Death:
The dead shall look me thro' and thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall:
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours
With larger other eyes than ours,
To make allowance for us all.

LII.

I cannot love thee as I ought,
For love reflects the thing be-
loved;

My words are only words, and
moved
Upon the topmost froth of thought.

'Yet blame not thou thy plaintive
song,'
The Spirit of true love replied;
'Thou canst not move me from
thy side,
Nor human frailty do me wrong.

'What keeps a spirit wholly true
To that ideal which he bears?
What record? not the sinless
years
That breathed beneath the Syrian
blue:

'So fret not, like an idle girl,
That life is dash'd with flecks of
sin,
Abide: thy wealth is gather'd in,
When Time hath sunder'd shell from
pearl.'

LIII.

How many a father have I seen,
A sober man, among his boys,
Whose youth was full of foolish
noise,
Who wears his manhood hale and
green:

And dare we to this fancy give,
That had the wild oat not been
sown,
The soil, left barren, scarce had
grown
The grain by which a man may live?

Or, if we held the doctrine sound
For life outliving heats of youth,
Yet who would preach it as a
truth
To those that eddy round and round?

Hold thou the good: define it well:
For fear divine Philosophy
Should push beyond her mark,
and be
Procuress to the Lords of Hell.

LIV.

Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be de-
stroy'd,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile com-
plete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream: but what am I?
An infant crying in the night:
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry.

LV.

The wish, that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have
The likeliest God within the soul?

Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil
dreams?
So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life;

That I, considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds,
And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of
cares

Upon the great world's altar-stairs
That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and
grope,

And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.

LVI.

'So careful of the type?' but no.
From scarped cliff and quarried
stone
She cries, 'A thousand types are
gone:
I care for nothing, all shall go.

'Thou makest thine appeal to me:
I bring to life, I bring to death:
The spirit does but mean the
breath:
I know no more.' And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry
skies,

Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,
Who trusted God was love indeed
And love Creation's final law—
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine, shriek'd against his
creed—

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills
Who battled for the True, the Just,
Be blown about the desert dust,
Or seal'd within the iron hills?

No more? A monster then, a dream,
A discord. Dragons of the prime,
That tare each other in their
slime,
Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!
O for thy voice to soothe and
bless!
What hope of answer, or redress?
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

LVII.

Peace; come away: the song of woe
Is after all an earthly song:
Peace; come away: we do him
wrong
To sing so wildly: let us go.

Come ; let us go : your cheeks are
pale ;
But half my life I leave behind :
Methinks my friend is richly
shrined ;
But I shall pass ; my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,
One set slow bell will seem to toll
The passing of the sweetest soul
That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,
Eternal greetings to the dead ;
And 'Ave, Ave, Ave,' said,
'Adieu, adieu' for evermore.

LVIII.

In those sad words I took farewell :
Like echoes in sepulchral halls,
As drop by drop the water falls
In vaults and catacombs, they fell ;

And, falling, idly broke the peace
Of hearts that beat from day to
day,
Half-conscious of their dying clay,
And those old crypts where they shall
cease.

The high Muse answer'd : 'Wherefore
grieve
Thy brethren with a fruitless tear ?
Abide a little longer here,
And thou shalt take a nobler leave.'

LIX.

Sorrow, wilt thou live with me
No casual mistress, but a wife,
My bosom-friend and half of life ;
As I confess it needs must be ;

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,
Be sometimes lovely like a bride,
And put thy harsher moods aside,
If thou wilt have me wise and good.

My centred passion cannot move,
Nor will it lesson from to-day
But I'll have leave at times to play
As with the creature of my love ;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,
With so much hope for years to
come,
That, howso'er I know thee, some
Could hardly tell what name were
thine.

LX.

He past ; a soul of nobler tone :
My spirit loved and loves him yet,
Like some poor girl whose heart
is set
On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,
She finds the baseness of her lot,
Half jealous of she knows not
what,
And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn ;
She sighs amid her narrow days,
Moving about the household ways,
In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbors come and go,
And tease her till the day draws
by :
At night she weeps, 'How vain
am I !
How should he love a thing so low ?'

LXI.

If, in thy second state sublime,
Thy ransom'd reason change re-
plies
With all the circle of the wise,
The perfect flower of human time ;

And if thou cast thine eyes below,
How dimly character'd and slight,
How dwarf'd a growth of cold
and night,
How blanch'd with darkness must I
grow !

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,
Where thy first form was made a
man ;
I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor
can
The soul of Shakspeare love thee more.

LXII.

Tho' if an eye that's downward cast
 Could make thee somewhat
 blench or fail,
 Then be my love an idle tale,
 And fading legend of the past;

And thou, as one that once declined,
 When he was little more than
 boy,
 On some unworthy heart with
 joy,
 But lives to wed an equal mind;

And breathes a novel world, the while
 His other passion wholly dies,
 Or in the light of deeper eyes
 Is matter for a flying smile.

LXIII.

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven,
 And love in which my hound has
 part,
 Can hang no weight upon my
 heart
 In its assumptions up to heaven;

And I am so much more than these,
 As thou, perchance, art more
 than I,
 And yet I spare them sympathy,
 And I would set their pains at ease.

So mayst thou watch me where I
 weep,
 As, unto vaster motions bound,
 The circuits of thine orbit round
 A higher height, a deeper deep.

LXIV.

Dost thou look back on what hath
 been,
 As some divinely gifted man,
 Whose life in low estate began
 And on a simple village green;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
 And grasps the skirts of happy
 chance,
 And breasts the blows of circum-
 stance,
 And grapples with his evil star;

Who makes by force his merit known
 And lives to clutch the golden
 keys,
 To mould a mighty state's
 decrees,
 And shape the whisper of the throne;

And moving up from high to higher,
 Becomes on Fortune's crowning
 slope
 The pillar of a people's hope,
 The centre of a world's desire;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,
 When all his active powers are
 still,
 A distant dearness in the hill,
 A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,
 While yet beside its vocal springs
 He play'd at counsellors and
 kings,
 With one that was his earliest mate;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea
 And reaps the labor of his
 hands,
 Or in the furrow musing stands;
 'Does my old friend remember me?'

LXV.

Sweet soul, do with me as thou wilt;
 I lull a fancy trouble-tost
 With 'Love's too precious to be
 lost,
 A little grain shall not be spilt.'

And in that solace can I sing,
 Till out of painful phases
 wrought
 There flutters up a happy
 thought,
 Self-balanced on a lightsome wing:

Since we deserved the name of
 friends,
 And thine effect so lives in me,
 A part of mine may live in thee
 And move thee on to noble ends.

LXVI.

You thought my heart too far dis-
eased;
You wonder when my fancies
play
To find me gay among the gay,
Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crost,
Which makes a desert in the
mind,
Has made me kindly with my
kind,
And like to him whose sight is lost;

Whose feet are guided thro' the land,
Whose jest among his friends is
free,
Who takes the children on his
knee,
And winds their curls about his hand:

He plays with threads, he beats his
chair
For pastime, dreaming of the
sky;
His inner day can never die,
His night of loss is always there.

LXVII.

When on my bed the moonlight falls,
I know that in thy place of rest
By that broad water of the west,
There comes a glory on the walls:

Thy marble bright in dark appears,
As slowly steals a silver flame
Along the letters of thy name,
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away;
From off my bed the moonlight
dies;
And closing eaves of wearied
eyes
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray:

And then I know the mist is drawn
A lucid veil from coast to coast,
And in the dark church like a
ghost
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

LXVIII.

When in the down I sink my head,
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times
my breath;
Sleep, Death's twin-brother,
knows not Death,
Nor can I dream of thee as dead:

I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn,
When all our path was fresh with
dew,
And all the bugle breezes blew
Reveillée to the breaking morn.

But what is this? I turn about,
I find a trouble in thine eye,
Which makes me sad I know not
why,
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt:

But ere the lark hath left the lea
I wake, and I discern the truth;
It is the trouble of my youth
That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

LXIX.

I dream'd there would be Spring no
more,
That Nature's ancient power was
lost:
The streets were black with
smoke and frost,
They chatter'd trifles at the door:

I wander'd from the noisy town,
I found a wood with thorny
boughs:
I took the thorns to bind my
brows,
I wore them like a civic crown:

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns
From youth and babe and hoary
hairs:
They call'd me in the public
squares
The fool that wears a crown of
thorns:

They call'd me fool, they call'd me
child:
I found an angel of the night;

The voice was low the look was
bright;
He look'd upon my crown and smiled :
He reach'd the glory of a hand,
That seem'd to touch it into leaf :
The voice was not the voice of
grief,
The words were hard to understand.

LXX.

I cannot see the features right,
When on the gloom I strive to
paint
The face I know; the hues are
faint
And mix with hollow masks of night ;
Cloud-towers by ghostly masons
wrought,
A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,
A hand that points, and palled
shapes
In shadowy thoroughfares of
thought ;
And crowds that stream from yawning
doors,
And shoals of pucker'd faces
drive ;
Dark bulks that tumble half alive,
And lazy lengths on boundless shores ;
Till all at once beyond the will
I hear a wizard music roll,
And thro' a lattice on the soul
Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

LXXI.

Sleep, kinsman thou to death and
trance
And madness, thou hast forged at
last
A night-long Present of the Past
In which we went thro' summer
France.
Hadst thou such credit with the soul ?
Then bring an opiate treble strong,
Drug down the blindfold sense of
wrong
That so my pleasure may be whole ;

While now we talk as once we talk'd
Of men and minds, the dust of
change,
The days that grow to something
strange,
In walking as of old we walk'd
Beside the river's wooded reach,
The fortress, and the mountain
ridge,
The cataract flashing from the
bridge,
The breaker breaking on the beach.

LXXII.

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
And howlest, issuing out of night,
With blasts that blow the poplar
white,
And lash with storm the streaming
pane ?
Day, when my crown'd estate begun
To pine in that reverse of doom,
Which sicken'd every living
bloom,
And blurr'd the splendor of the sun ;
Who usherest in the dolorous hour
With thy quick tears that make
the rose
Pull sideways, and the daisy close
Her crimson fringes to the shower ;
Who might'st have heaved a windless
flame
Up the deep East, or, whispering,
play'd
A chequer-work of beam and
shade
Along the hills, yet look'd the same.
As wan, as chill, as wild as now ;
Day, mark'd as with some hideous
crime,
When the dark hand struck down
thro' time,
And cancell'd nature's best : but thou,
Lift as thou may'st thy burthen'd brows
Thro' clouds that drench the
morning star,

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As wan, as chill, as wild as now ;
Day, mark'd as with some hideous
crime,
When the dark hand struck down
thro' time,
And cancell'd nature's best : but thou,
Lift as thou may'st thy burthen'd brows
Thro' clouds that drench the
morning star,

And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf
afar,
And sow the sky with flying boughs,
And up thy vault with roaring sound
Climb thy thick noon, disastrous
day;
Touch thy dull goal of joyless
gray,
And hide thy shame beneath the
ground.

LXXIII.

So many worlds, so much to do,
So little done, such things to be,
How know I what had need of
thee,
For thou wert strong as thou wert
true?

The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,
The head hath miss'd an earthly
wreath:

I curse not nature, no, nor death;
For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass; the path that each man
trod
Is dim, or will be dim, with
weeds:

What fame is left for human
deeds

In endless age? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,
Fade wholly, while the soul exults,
And self-infolds the large results
Of force that would have forged a
name.

LXXIV.

As sometimes in a dead man's face,
To those that watch it more and
more,

A likeness, hardly seen before,
Comes out—to some one of his race:

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,
I see thee what thou art, and
know

Thy likeness to the wise below,
Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,
And what I see I leave unsaid,
Nor speak it, knowing Death has
made
His darkness beautiful with thee.

LXXV.

I leave thy praises unexpress'd
In verse that brings myself relief,
And by the measure of my grief
I leave thy greatness to be guess'd;

What practice howsoever expert
In fitting aptest words to things,
Or voice the richest-toned that
sings,
Hath power to give thee as thou wert?

I care not in these fading days
To raise a cry that lasts not long,
And round thee with the breeze of
song
To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perish'd in the green,
And, while we breathe beneath
the sun,
The world which credits what is
done
Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame;
But somewhere, out of human
view,
Whate'er thy hands are set to do
Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

LXXVI.

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,
And in a moment set thy face
Where all the starry heavens of
space
Are sharpen'd to a needle's end;

Take wings of foresight; lighten thro'
The secular abyss to come,
And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb
Before the mouldering of a yew;

And if the matin songs, that woke
The darkness of our planet, last,

Thine own shall wither in the
vast,
Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy
bowers
With fifty Mays, thy songs are
vain;
And what are they when these
remain
The ruin'd shells of hollow towers?

LXXVII.

What hope is here for modern rhyme
To him, who turns a musing eye
On songs, and deeds, and lives,
that lie
Foreshorten'd in the tract of time?

These mortal lullabies of pain
May bind a book, may line a box,
May serve to curl a maiden's
locks;
Or when a thousand moons shall wane

A man upon a stall may find,
And, passing, turn the page that
tells
A grief, then changed to some-
thing else,
Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that? My darken'd ways
Shall ring with music all the
same;
To breathe my loss is more than
fame,
To utter love more sweet than praise.

LXXVIII.

Again at Christmas did we weave
The holly round the Christmas
hearth;
The silent snow possess'd the
earth,
And calmly fell our Christmas-eve:

The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost,
No wing of wind the region swept,
But over all things brooding slept
The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,
Again our ancient games had
place,
The mimic picture's breathing
grace,
And dance and song and hoodman-
blind.

Who show'd a token of distress?
No single tear, no mark of pain:
O sorrow, then can sorrow wane?
O grief, can grief be changed to less?

O last regret, regret can die!
No—mixt with all this mystic
frame,
Her deep relations are the same,
But with long use her tears are dry.

LXXIX.

'More than my brothers are to me,'—
Let this not vex thee, noble
heart!
I know thee of what force thou
art
To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,
As moulded like in Nature's
mint;
And hill and wood and field did
print
The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd
Thro' all his eddying coves; the
same
All winds that roam the twilight
came
In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,
One lesson from one book we
learn'd,
Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet
turn'd
To black and brown on kindred
brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,
But he was rich where I was
poor,

And he supplied my want the
more
As his unlikeness fitted mine.

LXXX.

If any vague desire should rise,
That holy Death ere Arthur died
Had moved me kindly from his
side,
And dropt the dust on tearless eyes ;

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,
The grief my loss in him had
wrought,
A grief as deep as life or thought,
But stay'd in peace with God and man.

I made a picture in the brain ;
I hear the sentence that he
speaks ;
He bears the burthen of the
weeks
But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free ;
And, influence-rich to soothe and
save,
Unused example from the grave
Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

LXXXI.

Could I have said while he was here,
'My love shall now no further
range ;
There cannot come a mellow
change,
For now is love mature in ear.'

Love, then, had hope of richer store :
What end is here to my com-
plaint ?
This haunting whisper makes me
faint,
'More years had made me love thee
more.'

But Death returns an answer sweet :
'My sudden frost was sudden
gain,
And gave all ripeness to the
grain,
It might have drawn from after-heat.'

LXXXII.

I wage not any feud with Death
For changes wrought on form
and face ;
No lower life that earth's
embrace
May breed with him, can fright my
faith.

Eternal process moving on,
From state to state the spirit
walks ;
And these are but the shatter'd
stalks,
Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare
The use of virtue out of earth :
I know transplanted human
worth
Will bloom to profit, elsewhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak
The wrath that garners in my
heart ;
He put our lives so far apart
We cannot hear each other speak.

LXXXIII.

Dip down upon the northern shore,
O sweet new-year delaying long :
Thou doest expectant nature
wrong ;
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded
noons,
Thy sweetness from its proper
place ?
Can trouble live with April days,
Or sadness in the summer moons ?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,
The little speedwell's darling blue,
Deep tulips dash'd with fiery
dew,
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,
That longs to burst a frozen bud
And flood a fresher throat with song.

LXXXIV.

When I contemplate all alone
 The life that had been thine
 below,
 And fix my thoughts on all the
 glow
 To which thy crescent would have
 grown;

I see thee sitting crown'd with good,
 A central warmth diffusing bliss
 In glance and smile, and clasp
 and kiss,
 On all the branches of thy blood;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly
 mine;
 For now the day was drawing on,
 When thou should'st link thy life
 with one
 Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled 'Uncle' on my knee;
 But that remorseless iron hour
 Made cypress of her orange
 flower,
 Despair of Hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,
 To clap their cheeks, to call them
 mine.
 I see their unborn faces shine
 Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honor'd guest,
 Thy partner in the flowery walk
 Of letters, genial table-talk,
 Or deep dispute, and graceful jest;

While now thy prosperous labor fills
 The lips of men with honest
 praise,
 And sun by sun the happy days
 Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair;
 And all the train of bounteous
 hours
 Conduct by paths of growing
 powers,
 To reverence and the silver hair;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,
 Her lavish mission richly
 wrought,
 Leaving great legacies of thought;
 Thy spirit should fail from off the
 globe;

What time mine own might also flee,
 As link'd with thine in love and
 fate,
 And, hovering o'er the dolorous
 strait
 To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,
 And He that died in Holy Land
 Would reach us out the shining
 hand,
 And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant?
 Ah, backward fancy, wherefore
 wake
 The old bitterness again, and
 break
 The low beginnings of content.

LXXXV.

This truth came borne with bier and
 pall,
 I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,
 'Tis better to have loved and lost,
 Than never to have loved at all—

O true in word, and tried in deed.
 Demanding, so to bring relief
 To this which is our common
 grief,
 What kind of life is that I lead;

And whether trust in things above
 Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sus-
 tain'd;
 And whether love for him have
 drain'd
 My capabilities of love;

Your words have virtue such as
 draws
 A faithful answer from the
 breast,

Thro' light reproaches, half
 exprest,
 And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,
 Till on mine ear this message
 falls,
 That in Vienna's fatal walls
 God's finger touch'd him, and he
 slept.

The great Intelligences fair
 That range above our mortal
 state,
 In circle round the blessed gate,
 Received and gave him welcome there;

And led him thro' the blissful climes,
 And show'd him in the fountain
 fresh
 All knowledge that the sons of
 flesh
 Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were
 dim,
 Whose life, whose thoughts were
 little worth,
 To wander on a darken'd earth,
 Where all things round me breathed
 of him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,
 O heart, with kindest motion
 warm,
 O sacred essence, other form,
 O solemn ghost, O crowned soul!

Yet none could better know than I,
 How much of act at human hands
 The sense of human will demands
 By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,
 I felt and feel, tho' left alone,
 His being working in mine own,
 The footsteps of his life in mine;

A life that all the Muses deck'd
 With gifts of grace, that might
 express
 All-comprehensive tenderness,
 All-subtilizing intellect:

And so my passion hath not swerved
 To works of weakness, but I find
 An image comforting the mind,
 And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,
 That loved to handle spiritual
 strife,
 Diffused the shock thro' all my
 life,
 But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again
 For other friends that once I met;
 Nor can it suit me to forget
 The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo your love: I count it crime
 To mourn for any overmuch;
 I, the divided half of such
 A friendship as had master'd Time;

Which masters Time indeed, and is
 Eternal, separate from fears:
 The all-assuming months and
 years
 Can take no part away from this:

But Summer on the steaming floods,
 And Spring that swells the narrow
 brooks,
 And Autumn, with a noise of
 rooks,
 That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave
 Recalls, in change of light or
 gloom,
 My old affection of the tomb,
 And my prime passion in the grave:

My old affection of the tomb,
 A part of stillness, yearns to
 speak:
 'Arise, and get thee forth and
 seek
 A friendship for the years to come.

'I watch thee from the quiet shore;
 Thy spirit up to mine can reach;
 But in dear words of human
 speech
 We two communicate no more.'

And I, 'Can clouds of nature stain
The starry clearness of the free?
How is it? Canst thou feel for
me
Some painless sympathy with pain?'

And lightly does the whisper fall;
'Tis hard for thee to fathom
this:
I triumph in conclusive bliss,
And that serene result of all.'

So hold I commerce with the dead;
Or so methinks the dead would
say;
Or so shall grief with symbols
play
And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,
That these things pass, and I
shall prove
A meeting somewhere, love with
love,
I crave your pardon, O my friend;

If not so fresh, with love as true,
I, clasping brother-hands, aver
I could not, if I would, transfer
The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart
The promise of the golden hours?
First love, first friendship, equal
powers,
That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,
That beats within a lonely place,
That yet remembers his embrace,
But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, tho' widow'd, may not rest
Quite in the love of what is gone,
But seeks to beat in time with one
That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,
Knowing the primrose yet is dear,
The primrose of the later year,
As not unlike to that of Spring.

LXXXVI.

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,
That rollst from the gorgeous
gloom
Of evening over brake and bloom
And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below
Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd wood,
And shadowing down the horned
flood
In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
The full new life that feeds thy
breath
Throughout my frame, till Doubt
and Death,
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas
On leagues of odor streaming far,
To where in yonder orient star
A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace.'

LXXXVII.

I past beside the reverend walls
In which of old I wore the gown;
I roved at random thro' the town,
And saw the tumult of the halls;

And heard once more in college fanes
The storm their high-built organs
make,
And thunder-music, rolling, shake
The prophet blazon'd on the panes;

And caught once more the distant
shout,
The measured pulse of racing oars
Among the willows; paced the
shores
And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt
The same, but not the same; and
last
Up that long walk of limes I past
To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door:
I linger'd; all within was noise

Of songs, and clapping hands, and
boys
That crash'd the glass and beat the
floor;

Where once we held debate, a band
Of youthful friends, on mind and
art,
And labor, and the changing mart,
And all the framework of the land;

When one would aim an arrow fair,
But send it slackly from the
string;
And one would pierce an outer
ring,
And one an inner, here and there;

And last the master-bowman, he,
Would cleave the mark. A will-
ing ear
We lent him. Who, but hung to
hear
The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and
grace
And music in the bounds of law,
To those conclusions when we saw
The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow
In azure orbits heavenly-wise;
And over those ethereal eyes
The bar of Michael Angelo.

LXXXVIII.

Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,
Rings Eden thro' the budded
quicks,

O tell me where the senses mix,
O tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate: fierce extremes em-
ploy
Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,
And in the midmost heart of grief
Thy passion clasps a secret joy:

And I—my harp would prelude woe—
I cannot all command the strings;
The glory of the sum of things
Will flash along the cords and go.

LXXXIX.

Witch-elms that counterchange the
floor
Of this flat lawn with dusk and
bright;
And thou, with all thy breadth and
height
Of foliage, towering sycamore;

How often, hither wandering down,
My Arthur found your shadows
fair,
And shook to all the liberal air
The dust and din and steam of town:

He brought an eye for all he saw;
He mixt in all our simple sports;
They pleased him, fresh from
brawling courts
And dusty purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,
Immantled in ambrosial dark,
To drink the cooler air, and mark
The landscape winking thro' the heat:

O sound to rout the brood of cares,
The sweep of scythe in morning
dew,
The gust that round the garden
flew,
And tumbled half the mellowing pears!

O bliss, when all in circle drawn
About him, heart and ear were fed
To hear him, as he lay and read
The Tuscan poets on the lawn:

Or in the all-golden afternoon
A guest, or happy sister, sung,
Or here she brought the harp and
flung
A ballad to the brightening moon:

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,
Beyond the bounding hill to stray,
And break the livelong summer
day

With banquet in the distant woods;
Whereat we glanced from theme to
theme,

Discuss'd the books to love or hate,
Or touch'd the changes of the state,
Or threaded some Socratic dream;

But if I praised the busy town,
He loved to rail against it still,
For 'ground in yonder social mill
We rub each other's angles down,

'And merge' he said 'in form and
gloss
The picturesque of man and man.'
We talk'd: the stream beneath
us ran,
The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,

Or cool'd within the glooming wave;
And last, returning from afar,
Before the crimson-circled star
Had fall'n into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,
We heard behind the woodbine
veil
The milk that bubbled in the pail,
And buzzings of the honied hours.

XC.

He tasted love with half his mind,
Nor ever drank the inviolate
spring
Where highest heaven, who first
could fling
This bitter seed among mankind;

That could the dead, whose dying eyes
Were closed with wail, resume
their life,
They would but find in child and
wife
An iron welcome when they rise:

'Twas well, indeed, when warm with
wine,
To pledge them with a kindly tear,
To talk them o'er, to wish them
here,
To count their memories half divine;

But if they came who past away,
Behold their brides in other
hands;

The hard heir strides about their
lands,
And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, tho' their sons were none of these,
Not less the yet-loved sire would
make
Confusion worse than death, and
shake
The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah dear, but come thou back to me:
Whatever change the years have
wrought,
I find not yet one lonely thought
That cries against my wish for thee.

XCI.

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,
And rarely pipes the mounted
thrush;
Or underneath the barren bush
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March;

Come, wear the form by which I know
Thy spirit in time among thy
peers;
The hope of unaccomplish'd years
Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing
change
May breathe, with many roses
sweet,
Upon the thousand waves of
wheat,
That ripple round the lonely grange;

Come: not in watches of the night,
But where the sunbeam broodeth
warm,
Come, beauteous in thine after
form,
And like a finer light in light.

XCII.

If any vision should reveal
Thy likeness, I might count it vain
As but the canker of the brain;
Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast
Together in the days behind,

I might but say, I hear a wind
Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view
A fact within the coming year ;
And tho' the months, revolving
near,
Should prove the phantom-warning
true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,
But spiritual presentiments,
And such refraction of events
As often rises ere they rise.

XCIII.

I shall not see thee. Dare I say
No spirit ever brake the band
That stays him from the native
land
Where first he walk'd when claspt in
clay ?

No visual shade of some one lost,
But he, the Spirit himself, may
come
Where all the nerve of sense is
numb ;
Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range
With gods in un conjectured bliss,
O, from the distance of the abyss
Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter ; hear
The wish too strong for words to
name ;
That in this blindness of the frame
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

XCIV.

How pure at heart and sound in head,
With what divine affections bold
Should be the man whose thought
would hold
An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call
The spirits from their golden day,
Except, like them, thou too canst
say,
My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,
Imaginations calm and fair,
The memory like a cloudless air,
The conscience as a sea at rest *

But when the heart is full of din,
And doubt beside the portal waits,
They can but listen at the gates,
And hear the household jar within.

XCV.

By night we linger'd on the lawn,
For underfoot the herb was dry ;
And genial warmth ; and o'er the
sky
The silvery haze of summer drawn ;

And calm that let the tapers burn
Unwavering ; not a cricket chirr'd :
The brook alone far-off was heard,
And on the board the fluttering urn :

And bats went round in fragrant skies,
And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes
That haunt the dusk, with ermine
capes
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes ;

While now we sang old songs that
peal'd
From knoll to knoll, where,
couch'd at ease,
The white kine glimmer'd, and
the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,
Withdrew themselves from me
and night,
And in the house light after light
Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart ; I read
Of that glad year which once had
been,
In those fall'n leaves which kept
their green,
The noble letters of the dead :

And strangely on the silence broke
The silent-speaking words, and
strange

Was love's dumb cry defying
change
To test his worth; and strangely
spoke

The faith, the vigor, bold to dwell
On doubts that drive the coward
back,
And keen thro' wordy snares to
track
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,
The dead man touch'd me from
the past,
And all at once it seem'd at last
The living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in this was wound, and
whirl'd
About empyreal heights of
thought,
And came on that which is, and
caught
The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out
The steps of Time—the shocks
of Chance—
The blows of Death. At length
my trance
Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with
doubt.

Vague words! but ah, how hard to
frame
In matter-moulded forms of
speech,
Or ev'n for intellect to reach
Thro' memory that which I became:

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd
The knolls once more where,
couch'd at ease,
The white kine glimmer'd, and the
trees
Laid their dark arms about the field:

And suck'd from out the distant gloom
A breeze began to tremble o'er
The large leaves of the sycamore,
And fluctuate all the still perfume

And gathering freshlier overhead,
Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and
swung
The heavy-folded rose, and flung
The lilies to and fro, and said

'The dawn, the dawn,' and died
away;
And East and West, without a
breath,
Mixt their dim lights, like life
and death,
To broaden into boundless day.

XCVI:

You say, but with no touch of scorn,
Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-
blue eyes
Are tender over drowning flies,
You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not: one indeed I knew
In many a subtle question versed,
Who touch'd a jarring lyre at
first,
But ever strove to make it true:

Perplex in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out.
There lives more faith in honest
doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather'd
strength,
He would not make his judgment
blind,
He faced the spectres of the mind
And laid them: thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own;
And Power was with him in the
night,
Which makes the darkness and
the light,
And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,
As over Sinai's peaks of old,
While Israel made their gods of
gold,
Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

XCVII.

My love has talk'd with rocks and
trees;
He finds on misty mountain-
ground
His own vast shadow glory-
crown'd;
He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life—
I look'd on these and thought of
thee
In vastness and in mystery,
And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two—they dwelt with eye on
eye,
Their hearts of old have beat in
tune,
Their meetings made December
June,
Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never past away;
The days she never can forget
Are earnest that he loves her yet,
Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart,
He loves her yet, she will not
weep,
Tho' rapt in matters dark and
deep
He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,
He reads the secret of the star,
He seems so near and yet so far,
He looks so cold: she thinks him
kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,
A wither'd violet is her bliss:
She knows not what his greatness
is,
For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings
Of early faith and plighted vows;
She knows but matters of the
house,
And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,
She darkly feels him great and
wise,
She dwells on him with faithful
eyes,
'I cannot understand: I love.'

XCVIII.

You leave us: you will see the Rhine,
And those fair hills I sail'd below,
When I was there with him; and
go
By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest
breath,
That City. All her splendor
seems
No livelier than the wisp that
gleams
On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair
Enwind her isles, unmark'd of
me:
I have not seen, I will not see
Vienna; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts
The birth, the bridal; friend from
friend
Is oftener parted, fathers bend
Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and pray
By each cold hearth, and sadness
flings
Her shadow on the blaze of
kings:
And yet myself have heard him say,

That not in any mother town
With statelier progress to and fro
The double tides of chariots flow
By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves; nor more content,
He told me, lives in any crowd,
When all is gay with lamps, and
loud
With sport and song, in booth and
tent,

Imperial halls, or open plain;
And wheels the circled dance,
and breaks
The rocket molten into flakes
Of crimson or in emerald rain.

XCIX.

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
So loud with voices of the birds,
So thick with lowings of the
herds,

Day, when I lost the flower of men;

Who tremblest thro' thy darkling red
On yon swoll'n brook that bubbles fast

By meadows breathing of the
past,

And woodlands holy to the dead;

Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves
A song that slights the coming
care,

And Autumn laying here and
there

A fiery finger on the leaves;

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath
To myriads on the genial earth,
Memories of bridal, or of birth,
And unto myriads more, of death.

O wheresoever those may be,
Betwixt the slumber of the poles,
To-day they count as kindred
souls;

They know me not, but mourn with
me.

C.

I climb the hill: from end to end
Of all the landscape underneath,
I find no place that does not
breathe

Some gracious memory of my friend;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,
Or low morass and whispering
reed,

Or simple stile from mead to
mead,

Or sheepwalk up the windy wold;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw
That hears the latest linnet trill,
Nor quarry trench'd along the
hill

And haunted by the wrangling daw;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock;
Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves
To left and right thro' meadowy
curves,

That feed the mothers of the flock;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,
And each reflects a kindlier day;
And, leaving these, to pass away,
I think once more he seems to die.

CI.

Unwatch'd, the garden bough shall
sway,

The tender blossom flutter down,
Unloved, that beech will gather
brown,

This maple burn itself away;

Unloved, the sun-flower, shining fair,
Ray round with flames her disk of
seed,

And many a rose-carnation feed
With summer spice the humming air;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,
The brook shall babble down the
plain,

At noon or when the lesser wain
Is twisting round the polar star;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,
And flood the haunts of hern and
crake;

Or into silver arrows break
The sailing moon in creek and cove;

Till from the garden and the wild
A fresh association blow,
And year by year the landscape
grow

Familiar to the stranger's child;

As year by year the laborer tills
His wonted glebe, or lops the
glades;

From deep to deep, to where we
saw
A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck
But thrice as large as man he bent
To greet us. Up the side I went,
And fell in silence on his neck :

Whereat those maidens with one mind
Bewail'd their lot; I did them
wrong :
' We served thee here,' they said,
' so long,
And wilt thou leave us now behind? '

So rapt I was, they could not win
An answer from my lips, but he
Replying, ' Enter likewise ye
And go with us : ' they enter'd in.

And while the wind began to sweep
A music out of sheet and shroud,
We steer'd her toward a crimson
cloud
That landlike slept along the deep.

CIV.

The time draws near the birth of
Christ ;
The moon is hid, the night is still ;
A single church below the hill
Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,
That wakens at this hour of rest
A single murmur in the breast,
That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound
In lands where not a memory
strays,
Nor landmark breathes of other
days,
But all is new unhallow'd ground.

CV.

To-night ungather'd let us leave
This laurel, let this holly stand :
We live within the stranger's
land,
And strangely falls our Christmas-eve.

Our father's dust is left alone
And silent under other snows :
There in due time the woodbine
blows,
The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse
The genial hour with mask and
mime :
For change of place, like growth
of time,
Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,
By which our lives are chiefly
proved,
A little spare the night I loved,
And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,
Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm ;
For who would keep an ancient
form
Thro' which the spirit breathes no
more ?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast ;
Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be
blown ;
No dance, no motion, save alone
What lightens in the lucid east

Of rising worlds by yonder wood,
Long sleeps the summer in the
seed ;
Run out your measured arcs, and
lead
The closing cycle rich in good.

CVI.

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light :
The year is dying in the night ;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the
snow :
The year is going, let him go ;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no
more;

Ring out the feud of rich and
poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the
times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful
rhymes,

But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and
blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of
gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier
hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

CVII.

It is the day when he was born,
A bitter day that early sank
Behind a purple frosty bank
Of vapor, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves
To deck the banquet. Fiercely
flies

The blast of North and East, and
ice

Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns
To yon hard crescent, as she
hangs

Above the wood which grides
and clangs
Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass
To darken on the rolling brine
That breaks the coast. But fetch
the wine,
Arrange the board and brim the glass;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,
To make a solid core of heat;
Be cheerful-minded, talk and
treat

Of all things ev'n as he were by;

We keep the day. With festal cheer,
With books and music, surely we
Will drink to him, whate'er he be,
And sing the songs he loved to hear.

CVIII.

I will not shut me from my kind,
And, lest I stiffen into stone,
I will not eat my heart alone,
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind:

What profit lies in barren faith,
And vacant yearning, tho' with
might
To scale the heaven's highest
height,
Or dive below the wells of Death?

What find I in the highest place,
But mine own phantom chanting
hymns?
And on the depths of death there
swims
The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be
Of sorrow under human skies:
'Tis held that sorrow makes us
wise,
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

CIX.

Heart-affluence in discursive talk
From household fountains never
drys;

The critic clearness of an eye,
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk ;

Seraphic intellect and force
To seize and throw the doubts of
man ;

Impassion'd logic, which outran
The hearer in its fiery course ;

High nature amorous of the good,
But touch'd with no ascetic gloom ;
And passion pure in snowy bloom
Thro' all the years of April blood ;

A love of freedom rarely felt,
Of freedom in her regal seat
Of England ; not the schoolboy
heat,
The blind hysterics of the Celt ;

And manhood fused with female
grace
In such a sort, the child would
twine
A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine,
And find his comfort in thy face ;

All these have been, and thee mine
eyes
Have look'd on : if they look'd
in vain,
My shame is greater who remain,
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

CX.

Thy converse drew us with delight,
The men of rathe and riper years :
The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,
The proud was half disarm'd of
pride,
Nor cared the serpent at thy side
To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert
by,
The flippant put himself to school
And heard thee, and the brazen
fool
Was soften'd, and he knew not why ;

While I, thy nearest, sat apart,
And felt thy triumph was as mine ;
And loved them more, that they
were thine,

The graceful tact, the Christian art ;

Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,
But mine the love that will not
tire,
And, born of love, the vague
desire

That spurs an imitative will.

CXI.

The churl in spirit, up or down
Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,
To him who grasps a golden ball,
By blood a king, at heart a clown ;

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil
His want in forms for fashion's
sake,
Will let his coltish nature break
At seasons thro' the gilded pale :

For who can always act ? but he,
To whom a thousand memories
call,
Not being less but more than all
The gentleness he seem'd to be,

Best seem'd the thing he was, and
join'd
Each office of the social hour
To noble manners, as the flower
And native growth of noble mind ;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,
Or villain fancy fleeting by,
Drew in the expression of an eye,
Where God and Nature met in light ;

And thus he bore without abuse
The grand old name of gentle-
man,
Defamed by every charlatan,
And soil'd with all ignoble use.

CXII.

High wisdom holds my wisdom less,
That I, who gaze with temperate
eyes

On glorious insufficiencies,
Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room
Of all my love, art reason why
I seem to cast a careless eye
On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou? some novel
power
Sprang up for ever at a touch,
And hope could never hope too
much,
In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,
And tracts of calm from tempest
made,
And world-wide fluctuation sway'd
In vassal tides that follow'd thought.

CXIII.

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise;
Yet how much wisdom sleeps
with thee

Which not alone had guided me,
But served the seasons that may rise;

For can I doubt, who knew thee keen
In intellect, with force and skill
To strive, to fashion, to fulfil—
I doubt not what thou wouldst have
been:

A life in civic action warm,
A soul on highest mission sent,
A potent voice of Parliament,
A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should licensed boldness gather force,
Becoming, when the time has
birth,

A lever to uplift the earth
And roll it in another course,

With thousand shocks that come and
go,
With agonies, with energies,
With overthrowings, and with
cries,
And undulations to and fro.

CXIV.

Who loves not Knowledge? Who
shall rail
Against her beauty? May she
mix
With men and prosper! Who
shall fix
Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire:
She sets her forward countenance
And leaps into the future chance,
Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain—
She cannot fight the fear of death.
What is she, cut from love and
faith,
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons? fiery-hot to burst
All barriers in her onward race
For power. Let her know her
place;
She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,
If all be not in vain; and guide
Her footsteps, moving side by
side
With wisdom, like the younger child:

For she is earthly of the mind,
But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.
O, friend, who camest to thy goal
So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like
thee,
Who grewest not alone in power
And knowledge, but by year and
hour
In reverence and in charity.

CXV.

Now fades the last long streak of
snow,
Now burgeons every maze of
quick
About the flowering squares, and
thick
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,
The distance takes a lovelier hue,
And drown'd in yonder living blue
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
The flocks are whiter down the vale,
And milkier every milky sail
On winding stream or distant sea ;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives
In yonder greenening gleam, and fly
The happy birds, that change their sky
To build and brood ; that live their lives

From land to land ; and in my breast
Spring wakens too ; and my regret
Becomes an April violet,
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

CXVI.

Is it, then, regret for buried time
That kinder in sweet April wakes,
And meets the year, and gives and takes
The colors of the crescent prime ?

Not all : the songs, the stirring air,
The life re-orient out of dust,
Cry thro' the sense to hearten trust
In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret : the face will shine
Upon me, while I muse alone ;
And that dear voice, I once have known,
Still speak to me of me and mine :

Yet less of sorrow lives in me
For days of happy commune dead ;

Less yearning for the friendship fled,
Than some strong bond which is to be.

CXVII.

O days and hours, your work is this
To hold me from my proper place,
A little while from his embrace,
For fuller gain of after bliss :

That out of distance might ensue
Desire of nearness doubly sweet ;
And unto meeting when we meet,
Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,
And every span of shade that steals,
And every kiss of toothed wheels,
And all the courses of the suns.

CXVIII.

Contemplate all this work of Time,
The giant laboring in his youth ;
Nor dream of human love and truth,
As dying Nature's earth and lime ;

But trust that those we call the dead
Are breathers of an ampler day
For ever nobler ends. They say,
The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,
And grew to seeming-random forms,
The seeming prey of cyclic storms,
Till at the last arose the man ;

Who throve and branch'd from clime to clime,
The herald of a higher race,
And of himself in higher place,
If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more ;
Or, crown'd with attributes of woe
Like glories, move his course,
and show
That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,
 And heated hot with burning
 fears,
 And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
 And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly
 The reeling Faun, the sensual
 feast;
 Move upward, working out the
 beast,
 And let the ape and tiger die.

CXXIX.

Doors, where my heart was used to
 beat
 So quickly, not as one that weeps
 I come once more; the city
 sleeps;
 I smell the meadow in the street;

I hear a chirp of birds; I see
 Betwixt the black fronts long-
 withdrawn
 A light-blue lane of early dawn,
 And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland,
 And bright the friendship of thine
 eye;
 And in my thoughts with scarce
 a sigh
 I take the pressure of thine hand.

CXX.

I trust I have not wasted breath:
 I think we are not wholly brain,
 Magnetic mockeries; not in vain,
 Like Paul with beasts, I fought with
 Death;

Not only cunning casts in clay:
 Let Science prove we are, and
 then
 What matters Science unto men,
 At least to me? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs
 Hereafter, up from childhood
 shape
 His action like the greater ape,
 But I was *born* to other things.

CXXI.

Sad Hesper o'er the buried sun
 And ready, thou, to die with him,
 Thou watchest all things ever dim
 And dimmer, and a glory done:

The team is loosen'd from the wain,
 The boat is drawn upon the
 shore;
 Thou listenest to the closing door,
 And life is darken'd in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,
 By thee the world's great work is
 heard
 Beginning, and the wakeful bird;
 Behind thee comes the greater light:

The market boat is on the stream,
 And voices hail it from the brink;
 Thou hear'st the village hammer
 clink,
 And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name
 For what is one, the first, the last,
 Thou, like my present and my
 past,
 Thy place is changed; thou art the
 same.

CXXII.

Oh, wast thou with me, dearest, then,
 While I rose up against my doom,
 And yearn'd to burst the folded
 gloom,
 To bare the eternal Heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,
 The strong imagination roll
 A sphere of stars about my soul,
 In all her motion one with law;

If thou wert with me, and the grave
 Divide us not, be with me now,
 And enter in at breast and brow,
 Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,
 And like an inconsiderate boy,
 As in the former flash of joy,
 I slip the thoughts of life and death;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,
And every dew-drop paints a bow,
The wizard lightnings deeply glow,
And every thought breaks out a rose.

CXXIII.

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.
O earth, what changes hast thou seen!
There where the long street roars,
hath been
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow
From form to form, and nothing stands;
They melt like mist, the solid lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves
and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,
And dream my dream, and hold it true;
For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,
I cannot think the thing farewell.

CXXIV.

That which we dare invoke to bless;
Our dearest faith; our ghastliest doubt;
He, They, One, All; within, without;
The Power in darkness whom we guess;

I found Him not in world or sun,
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye;
Nor thro' the questions men may try,

The petty cobwebs we have spun:

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,
I heard a voice 'believe no more'
And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the Godless deep;

A warmth within the breast would melt
The freezing reason's colder part,

And like a man in wrath the heart
Stood up and answer'd 'I have felt.'

No, like a child in doubt and fear:
But that blind clamor made me wise;

Then was I as a child that cries,
But, crying, knows his father near;

And what I am beheld again
What is, and no man understands;
And out of darkness came the hands
That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

CXXV.

Whatever I have said or sung,
Some bitter notes my heart would give,
Yea, tho' there often seem'd to live

A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth;
She did but look through dimmer eyes;
Or Love but play'd with gracious lies,
Because he felt so fix'd in truth:

And if the song were full of care,
He breathed the spirit of the song;
And if the words were sweet and strong
He set his royal signet there;

Abiding with me till I sail
To seek thee on the mystic deeps,
And this electric force, that keeps
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

CXXVI.

Love is and was my Lord and King,
And in his presence I attend
To hear the tidings of my friend,
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my King and Lord,
And will be, tho' as yet I keep
Within his court on earth, and sleep
Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel
 Who moves about from place to
 place,
 And whispers to the worlds of
 space,
 In the deep night, that all is well.

CXXVII.

And all is well, tho' faith and form
 Be sunder'd in the night of fear;
 Well roars the storm to those
 that hear
 A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,
 And justice, ev'n tho' thrice again
 The red fool-fury of the Seine
 Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,
 And him, the lazar, in his rags:
 They tremble, the sustaining
 crags;
 The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood;
 The fortress crashes from on high,
 The brute earth lightens to the
 sky,
 And the great Æon sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of Hell;
 While thou, dear spirit, happy
 star,
 O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,
 And smilest, knowing all 'is well.

CXXVIII.

The love that rose on stronger wings,
 Unpalsied when he met with
 Death,

Is comrade of the lesser faith
 That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood
 Of onward time shall yet be made,
 And throned races may degrade;
 Yet O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and
 Fear,
 If all your office had to do

With old results that look like
 new;
 If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,
 To fool the crowd with glorious
 lies,
 To cleave a creed in sects and
 cries,
 To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,
 To cramp the student at his desk,
 To make old bareness picturesque
 And tuft with grass a feudal tower;

Why then my scorn might well descend
 On you and yours. I see in part
 That all, as in some piece of art,
 Is toil coöperant to an end.

CXXIX.

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,
 So far, so near in woe and weal;
 O loved the most, when most I
 feel
 There is a lower and a higher;

Known and unknown; human, divine;
 Sweet human hand and lips and
 eye;
 Dear heavenly friend that canst
 not die,
 Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine;

Strange friend, past, present, and to
 be;
 Loved deeper, darker under-
 stood;
 Behold, I dream a dream of good,
 And mingle all the world with thee.

CXXX.

Thy voice is on the rolling air;
 I hear thee where the waters run;
 Thou standest in the rising sun,
 And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess;
 But tho' I seem in star and flower
 To feel thee some diffusive power,
 I do not therefore love thee less:

My love involves the love before ;
 My love is vaster passion now ;
 Tho' mix'd with God and Nature
 thou,
 I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh ;
 I have thee still, and I rejoice ;
 I prosper, circled with thy voice ;
 I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

CXXXI.

O living will that shalt endure
 When all that seems shall suffer
 shock,
 Rise in the spiritual rock,
 Flow thro' our deeds and make them
 pure,

That we may lift from out of dust
 A voice as unto him that hears,
 A cry above the conquer'd years
 To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,
 The truths that never can be
 proved
 Until we close with all we loved,
 And all we flow from, soul in soul.

O true and tried, so well and long,
 Demand not thou a marriage lay ;
 In that it is thy marriage day
 Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss
 Since first he told me that he
 loved
 A daughter of our house ; nor
 proved
 Since that dark day a day like this ;

Tho' I since then have number'd o'er
 Some thrice three years : they
 went and came,
 Remade the blood and changed
 the frame,
 And yet is love not less, but more ;

No longer caring to embalm
 In dying songs a dead regret,

But like a statue solid-set,
 And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more
 Than in the summers that are
 flown,
 For I myself with these have
 grown
 To something greater than before ;

Which makes appear the songs I
 made
 As echoes out of weaker times,
 As half but idle brawling rhymes,
 The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,
 That must be made a wife ere
 noon ?
 She enters, glowing like the moon
 Of Eden on its bridal bower :

On me she bends her blissful eyes
 And then on thee ; they meet thy
 look
 And brighten like the star that
 shook
 Betwixt the palms of paradise.

O when her life was yet in bud,
 He too foretold the perfect rose.
 For thee she grew, for thee she
 grows
 For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy ; full of power ;
 As gentle ; liberal-minded, great,
 Consistent ; wearing all that
 weight
 Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out : the noon is near,
 And I must give away the bride ;
 She fears not, or with thee beside
 And me behind her, will not fear.

For I that danced her on my knee,
 That watch'd her on her nurse's
 arm,
 That shielded all her life from
 harm
 At last must part with her to thee ;

Now waiting to be made a wife,
 Her feet, my darling, on the
 dead;
 Their pensive tablets round her
 head,
 And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,
 The 'wilt thou' answer'd, and
 again
 The 'wilt thou' ask'd, till out of
 twain
 Her sweet 'I will' has made you one.

Now sign your names, which shall be
 read,
 Mute symbols of a joyful morn,
 By village eyes as yet unborn;
 The names are sign'd, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells
 The joy to every wandering
 breeze;
 The blind wall rocks, and on the
 trees
 The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours
 Await them. Many a merry face
 Salutes them—maidens of the
 place,
 That pelt us in the porch with
 flowers.

O happy hour, behold the bride
 With him to whom her hand I
 gave.
 They leave the porch, they pass
 the grave
 That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,
 For them the light of life in-
 creased,
 Who stayed to share the morning
 feast,
 Who rests to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance
 To meet and greet a whiter sun;
 My drooping memory will not
 shun
 The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,
 And hearts are warm'd and faces
 bloom,
 As drinking health to bride and
 groom
 We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I
 Conjecture of a stiller guest,
 Perchance, perchance, among the
 rest,
 And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,
 And those white-favor'd horses
 wait;
 They rise, but linger; it is late;
 Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark
 From little cloudlets on the grass,
 But sweeps away as out we pass
 To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,
 And talk of others that are wed,
 And how she look'd, and what he
 said,
 And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,
 The shade of passing thought,
 the wealth
 Of words and wit, the double
 health,
 The crowning cup, the three-times-
 three,

And last the dance;—till I retire:
 Dumb is that tower which spake
 so loud,
 And high in heaven the stream-
 ing cloud,
 And on the downs a rising fire:

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,
 Till over down and over dale
 All night the shining vapor sail
 And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing
 rills,
 And catch at every mountain head,

And o'er the friths that branch
and spread
Their sleeping silver thro' the hills;
And touch with shade the bridal
doors,
With tender gloom the roof, the
wall;
And breaking let the splendour
fall
To spangle all the happy shores
By which they rest, and ocean sounds,
And, star and system rolling
past,
A soul shall draw from out the
vast
And strike his being into bounds,
And, moved thro' life of lower phase,
Result in man, be born and think,
And act and love, a closer link
Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look
On knowledge; under whose
command
Is Earth and Earth's, and in their
hand
Is Nature like an open book;
No longer half-akin to brute,
For all we thought and loved and
did,
And hoped, and suffer'd, is but
seed
Of what in them is flower and fruit;
Whereof the man, that with me trod
This planet, was a noble type
Appearing ere the times were ripe,
That friend of mine who lives in God,
That God, which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.

IDYLLS OF THE KING.

IN TWELVE BOOKS.

'Flos Regum Arthurus.'—JOSEPH OF EXETER.

DEDICATION.

THESE to His Memory—since he
held them dear,
Perchance as finding there uncon-
sciously
Some image of himself—I dedicate,
I dedicate, I consecrate with tears—
These Idylls.

And indeed He seems to me
Scarce other than my king's ideal
knight,
'Who revered his conscience as
his king;
Whose glory was, redressing human
wrong;
Who spake no slander, no, nor
listen'd to it;
Who loved one only and who clave
to her—'
Her—over all whose realms to their
last isle,

Commingled with the gloom of im-
minent war,
The shadow of His loss drew like
eclipse,
Darkening the world. We have lost
him: he is gone:
We know him now: all narrow jeal-
ousies
Are silent; and we see him as he
moved,
How modest, kindly, all-accomplish'd,
wise,
With what sublime repression of him-
self,
And in what limits, and how tenderly;
Not swaying to this faction or to
that;
Not making his high place the lawless
perch
Of wing'd ambitions, nor a vantage-
ground

For pleasure; but thro' all this tract
 of years
 Wearing the white flower of a blame-
 less life,
 Before a thousand peering littlenesses,
 In that fierce light which beats upon a
 throne,
 And blackens every blot: for where
 is he,
 Who dares foreshadow for an only son
 A lovelier life, a more unstain'd,
 than his?
 Or how should England dreaming of
his sons
 Hope more for these than some in-
 heritance
 Of such a life, a heart, a mind as thine,
 Thou noble Father of her Kings to be,
 Laborious for her people and her
 poor—
 Voice in the rich dawn of an ampler
 day—
 Far-sighted summoner of War and
 Waste
 To fruitful strifes and rivalries of
 peace—
 Sweet nature gilded by the gracious
 gleam
 Of letters, dear to Science, dear to Art,

Dear to thy land and ours, a Prince
 indeed,
 Beyond all titles, and a household
 name,
 Hereafter, thro' all times, Albert the
 Good.

Break not, O woman's-heart, but
 still endure;
 Break not, for thou art Royal, but
 endure,
 Remembering all the beauty of that
 star
 Which shone so close beside Thee
 that ye made
 One light together, but has past and
 leaves
 The Crown a lonely splendor.
 May all love,
 His love, unseen but felt, o'ershadow
 Thee,
 The love of all Thy sons encompass
 Thee,
 The love of all Thy daughters cherish
 Thee,
 The love of all Thy people comfort
 Thee,
 Till God's love set Thee at his side
 again!

THE COMING OF ARTHUR.

LEODOGRAN, the King of Cameliard,
 Had one fair daughter, and none other
 child;
 And she was fairest of all flesh on
 earth,
 Guinevere, and in her his one delight.

For many a petty king ere Arthur
 came
 Ruled in this isle, and ever waging
 war
 Each upon other, wasted all the land;
 And still from time to time the heathen
 host
 Swarm'd overseas, and harried what
 was left.
 And so there grew great tracts of
 wilderness,
 Wherein the beast was ever more and
 more,

But man was less and less, till Arthur
 came.
 For first Aurelius lived and fought
 and died,
 And after him King Uther fought and
 died,
 But either fail'd to make the kingdom
 one.
 And after these King Arthur for a space,
 And thro' the puissance of his Table
 Round,
 Drew all their petty princedom under
 him,
 Their king and head, and made a
 realm, and reign'd.

And thus the land of Cameliard was
 waste,
 Thick with wet woods, and many a
 beast therein,

And none or few to scare or chase the
beast;
So that wild dog, and wolf and boar
and bear
Came night and day, and rooted in
the fields,
And wallow'd in the gardens of the
King.
And ever and anon the wolf would steal
The children and devour, but now
and then,
Her own brood lost or dead, lent her
fierce teat
To human sucklings; and the chil-
dren, housed
In her foul den, there at their meat
would growl,
And mock their foster-mother on four
feet,
Till, straighten'd, they grew up to wolf-
like men,
Worse than the wolves. And King
Leodogran
Groan'd for the Roman legions here
again,
And Cæsar's eagle: then his brother
king,
Urien, assail'd him: last a heathen
horde,
Reddening the sun with smoke and
earth with blood,
And on the spike that split the
mother's heart
Spitting the child, brake on him, till,
amazed,
He knew not whither he should turn
for aid.

But—for he heard of Arthur newly
crown'd,
Tho' not without an uproar made by
those
Who cried, 'He is not Uther's son'—
the King
Sent to him, saying, 'Arise, and help
us thou!
For here between the man and beast
we die.'

And Arthur yet had done no deed
of arms,
But heard the call, and came: and
Guinevere

Stood by the castle walls to watch
him pass;
But since he neither wore on helm or
shield
The golden symbol of his kinglihood,
But rode a simple knight among his
knights,
And many of these in richer arms than
he,
She saw him not, or mark'd not, if
she saw,
One among many, tho' his face was
bare.
But Arthur, looking downward as he
past,
Felt the light of her eyes into his life
Smite on the sudden, yet rode on, and
pitch'd
His tents beside the forest. Then he
drave
The heathen; after, slew the beast,
and fell'd
The forest, letting in the sun, and made
Broad pathways for the hunter and
the knight
And so return'd.

For while he linger'd there,
A doubt that ever smoulder'd in the
hearts
Of those great Lords and Barons of
his realm
Flash'd forth and into war: for most
of these,
Colleguing with a score of petty kings,
Made head against him, crying, 'Who
is he
That he should rule us? who hath
proven him
King Uther's son? for lo! we look at
him,
And find nor face nor bearing, limbs
nor voice,
Are like to those of Uther whom we
knew.
This is the son of Gorloïs, not the
King;
This is the son of Anton, not the King.'

And Arthur, passing thence to
battle, felt
Travail, and throes and agonies of the
life,

Desiring to be join'd with Guinevere ;
 And thinking as he rode, ' Her father
 said
 That there between the man and beast
 they die.
 Shall I not lift her from this land of
 beasts
 Up to my throne, and side by side
 with me ?
 What happiness to reign a lonely king,
 Vext—O ye stars that shudder over
 me,
 O earth that soundest hollow under
 me,
 Vext with waste dreams ? for saving I
 be join'd
 To her that is the fairest under heaven,
 I seem as nothing in the mighty world,
 And cannot will my will, nor work my
 work
 Wholly, nor make myself in mine
 own realm
 Victor and lord. But were I join'd
 with her,
 Then might we live together as one
 life,
 And reigning with one will in every-
 thing
 Have power on this dark land to
 lighten it,
 And power on this dead world to
 make it live.'

Thereafter—as he speaks who tells
 the tale—
 When Arthur reach'd a field-of-battle
 bright
 With pitch'd pavilions of his foe, the
 world
 Was all so clear about him, that he
 saw
 The smallest rock far on the faintest
 hill,
 And even in high day the morning
 star.
 So when the King had set his banner
 broad,
 At once from either side, with trump-
 et-blast,
 And shouts, and clarions shrilling
 unto blood,
 The long-lanced battle let their horses
 run.

And now the Barons and the kings
 prevail'd,
 And now the King, as here and there
 that war
 Went swaying ; but the Powers who
 walk the world
 Made lightnings and great thunders
 over him,
 And dazed all eyes, till Arthur by
 main might,
 And mightier of his hands with every
 blow,
 And leading all his knighthood threw
 the kings
 Carádos, Urien, Cradlemon of
 Wales,
 Claudias, and Clariance of Northum-
 berland,
 The King Brandagoras of Latangor,
 With Anguisant of Erin, Morgan-
 ore,
 And Lot of Orkney. Then, before a
 voice
 As dreadful as the shout of one who
 sees
 To one who sins, and deems himself
 alone
 And all the world asleep, they swerved
 and brake
 Flying, and Arthur call'd to stay the
 brands
 That hack'd among the flyers, ' Ho !
 they yield !'
 So like a painted battle the war stood
 Silenced, the living quiet as the dead,
 And in the heart of Arthur joy was
 lord.
 He laugh'd upon his warrior whom he
 loved
 And honor'd most. ' Thou dost not
 doubt me King,
 So well thine arm hath wrought for
 me to-day.'
 ' Sir and my liege,' he cried, ' the fire
 of God
 Descends upon thee in the battle-
 field :
 I know thee for my King !' Whereat
 the two,
 For each had warded either in the
 fight,
 Sware on the field of death a death-
 less love.

And Arthur said, 'Man's word is
God in man :
Let chance what will, I trust thee to
the death.'

Then quickly from the foughten
field he sent
Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere,
His new-made knights, to King
Leodogran,
Saying, 'If I in aught have served
thee well,
Give me thy daughter Guinevere to
wife.'

Whom when he heard, Leodogran
in heart
Debating—'How should I that am a
king,
However much he help me at my need,
Give my one daughter saving to a king,
And a king's son?'—lifted his voice,
and call'd
A hoary man, his chamberlain, to
whom
He trusted all things, and of him
required
His counsel: 'Knowest thou aught
of Arthur's birth?'

Then spake the hoary chamberlain
and said,
'Sir King, there be but two old men
that know:
And each is twice as old as I; and
one
Is Merlin, the wise man that ever
served
King Uther thro' his magic art; and
one
Is Merlin's master (so they call him)
Bleys,
Who taught him magic; but the
scholar ran
Before the master, and so far, that
Bleys,
Laid magic by, and sat him down,
and wrote
All things and whatsoever Merlin did
In one great annal-book, where after
years
Will learn the secret of our Arthur's
birth.'

To whom the King Leodogran
replied,
'O friend, had I been holpen half as
well
By this King Arthur as by thee to-
day,
Then beast and man had had their
share of me :
But summer here before us yet once
more
Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere.'

Then, when they came before him,
the King said,
'I have seen the cuckoo chased by
lesser fowl,
And reason in the chase: but where-
fore now
Do these your lords stir up the heat
of war,
Some calling Arthur born of Gorlois,
Others of Anton? Tell me, ye your-
selves,
Hold ye this Arthur for King Uther's
son?'

And Ulfius and Brastias answer'd,
'Ay.'
Then Bedivere, the first of all his
knights
Knighted by Arthur at his crowning,
spake—
For bold in heart and act and word
was he,
Whenever slander breathed against
the King—

'Sir, there be many rumors on this
head:
For there be those who hate him in
their hearts,
Call him baseborn, and since his ways
are sweet,
And theirs are bestial, hold him less
than man :
And there be those who deem him
more than man,
And dream he dropt from heaven: but
my belief
In all this matter—so ye care to
learn—
Sir, for ye know that in King Uther's
time

The prince and warrior Gorlois, he
 that held
 Tintagil castle by the Cornish sea,
 Was wedded with a winsome wife,
 Ygerne :
 And daughters had she borne him,—
 one whereof,
 Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney,
 Bellicent,
 Hath ever like a loyal sister cleaved
 To Arthur,—but a son she had not
 borne.
 And Uther cast upon her eyes of love :
 But she, a stainless wife to Gorlois,
 So loathed the bright dishonor of his
 love,
 That Gorlois and King Uther went to
 war :
 And overthrown was Gorlois and
 slain.
 Then Uther in his wrath and heat
 besieged
 Ygerne within Tintagil, where her
 men,
 Seeing the mighty swarm about their
 walls,
 Left her and fled, and Uther enter'd
 in,
 And there was none to call to but
 himself.
 So, compass'd by the power of the
 King,
 Enforced she was to wed him in her
 tears,
 And with a shameful swiftness : after-
 ward,
 Not many moons, King Uther died
 himself,
 Moaning and wailing for an heir to
 rule
 After him, lest the realm should go to
 wrack.
 And that same night, the night of the
 new year,
 By reason of the bitterness and grief
 That vexed his mother, all before his
 time
 Was Arthur born, and all as soon as
 born
 Deliver'd at a secret postern-gate
 To Merlin, to be holden far apart
 Until his hour should come ; because
 the lords

Of that fierce day were as the lords of
 this,
 Wild beasts, and surely would have
 torn the child
 Piecemeal among them, had they
 known ; for each
 But sought to rule for his own self
 and hand,
 And many hated Uther for the sake
 Of Gorlois. Wherefore Merlin took
 the child,
 And gave him to Sir Anton, an old
 knight
 And ancient friend of Uther ; and his
 wife
 Nursed the young prince, and rear'd
 him with her own ;
 And no man knew. And ever since
 the lords
 Have foughten like wild beasts among
 themselves,
 So that the realm has gone to wrack :
 but now,
 This year, when Merlin (for his hour
 had come)
 Brought Arthur forth, and set him in
 the hall,
 Proclaiming, "Here is Uther's heir,
 your king,"
 A hundred voices cried, "Away with
 him !
 No kings of ours ! a son of Gorlois
 he,
 Or else the child of Anton, and no
 king,
 Or else baseborn." Yet Merlin thro'
 his craft,
 And while the people clamor'd for a
 king,
 Had Arthur crown'd ; but after, the
 great lords
 Banded, and so brake out in open war.'

Then while the King debated with
 himself
 If Arthur were the child of shameful-
 ness,
 Or born the son of Gorlois, after
 death,
 Or Uther's son, and born before his
 time,
 Or whether there were truth in any-
 thing

Said by these three, there came to
Cameliard,
With Gawain and young Modred, her
two sons,
Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney,
Bellicent;
Whom as he could, not as he would,
the King
Made feast for, saying, as they sat at
meat,

‘A doubtful throne is ice on summer seas.
Ye come from Arthur's court: Victor
his men
Report him! Yea, but ye—think ye
this king—
So many those that hate him, and so
strong,
So few his knights, however brave
they be—
Hath body enow to hold his foemen
down?’

‘O King,’ she cried, ‘and I will tell
thee: few,
Few, but all brave, all of one mind
with him;
For I was near him when the savage
yells
Of Uther's peerage died, and Arthur
sat
Crown'd on the dais, and his warriors
cried,
“Be thou the king, and we will work
thy will
Who love thee.” Then the King in
low deep tones,
And simple words of great authority,
Bound them by so strait vows to his
own self,
That when they rose, knighted from
kneeling, some
Were pale as at the passing of a ghost,
Some flush'd, and others dazed, as one
who wakes
Half-blinded at the coming of a light.

‘But when he spake and cheer'd his
Table Round
With large, divine, and comfortable
words,
Beyond my tongue to tell thee—I
beheld

From eye to eye thro' all their Order
flash
A momentary likeness of the King:
And ere it left their faces, thro' the
cross
And those around it and the Crucified,
Down from the casement over Arthur,
smote
Flame-color, vert and azure, in three
rays,
One falling upon each of three fair
queens,
Who stood in silence near his throne,
the friends
Of Arthur, gazing on him, tall, with
bright
Sweet faces, who will help him at his
need.

‘And there I saw mage Merlin,
whose vast wit
And hundred winters are but as the
hands
Of loyal vassals toiling for their liege.

‘And near him stood the Lady of
the Lake,
Who knows a subtler magic than his
own—
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful.
She gave the King his huge cross-
hilted sword,
Whereby to drive the heathen out:
a mist
Of incense curl'd about her, and her
face
Wellnigh was hidden in the minster
gloom;
But there was heard among the holy
hymns
A voice as of the waters, for she
dwells
Down in a deep; calm, whatsoever
storms
May shake the world, and when the
surface rolls,
Hath power to walk the waters like
our Lord.

‘There likewise I beheld Excalibur
Before him at his crowning borne, the
sword

That rose from out the bosom of the lake,
 And Arthur row'd across and took it—rich
 With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,
 Bewildering heart and eye—the blade so bright
 That men are blinded by it—on one side,
 Graven in the oldest tongue of all this world,
 “Take me,” but turn the blade and ye shall see,
 And written in the speech ye speak yourself,
 “Cast me away!” And sad was Arthur's face
 Taking it, but old Merlin counsell'd him,
 “Take thou and strike! the time to cast away
 Is yet far-off.” So this great brand the king
 Took, and by this will beat his foemen down.'

Thereat Leodogran rejoiced, but thought
 To sift his doubtings to the last, and ask'd,
 Fixing full eyes of question on her face,
 ‘The swallow and the swift are near akin,
 But thou art closer to this noble prince,
 Being his own dear sister;’ and she said,
 ‘Daughter of Gorlois and Ygerne am I;’
 ‘And therefore Arthur's sister?’ ask'd the King.
 She answer'd, ‘These be secret things,’ and sign'd
 To those two sons to pass, and let them be.
 And Gawain went, and breaking into song
 Sprang out, and follow'd by his flying hair
 Ran like a colt, and leapt at all he saw:
 But Modred laid his ear beside the doors,

And there half-heard; the same that afterward
 Struck for the throne, and striking found his doom.

And then the Queen made answer,
 ‘What know I?
 For dark my mother was in eyes and hair,
 And dark in hair and eyes am I; and dark
 Was Gorlois, yea and dark was Uther too,
 Wellnigh to blackness; but this King is fair
 Beyond the race of Britons and of men.
 Moreover, always in my mind I hear
 A cry from out the dawning of my life,
 A mother weeping, and I hear her say,
 “O that ye had some brother, pretty one,
 To guard thee on the rough ways of the world.”’

‘Ay,’ said the King, ‘and hear ye such a cry?
 But when did Arthur chance upon thee first?’

‘O King!’ she cried, ‘and I will tell thee true:
 He found me first when yet a little maid:
 Beaten I had been for a little fault
 Whereof I was not guilty; and out I ran
 And flung myself down on a bank of heath,
 And hated this fair world and all therein,
 And wept, and wish'd that I were dead; and he—
 I know not whether of himself he came,
 Or brought by Merlin, who, they say, can walk
 Unseen at pleasure—he was at my side,
 And spake sweet words, and comforted my heart,



"The wild hunt" where
ribb of "wreck"

And dried my tears, being a child
with me.
And many a time he came, and ever-
more
As I grew greater grew with me; and
sad
At times he seem'd, and sad with him
was I,
Stern too at times, and then I loved
him not,
But sweet again, and then I loved
him well.
And now of late I see him less and
less,
But those first days had golden hours
for me,
For then I surely thought he would be
king.

‘ But let me tell thee now another
tale :
For Bleys, our Merlin’s master, as
they say,
Died but of late, and sent his cry to
me,
To hear him speak before he left his
life.
Shrunk like a fairy changeling lay the
mage ;
And when I enter’d told me that him-
self
And Merlin ever served about the
King,
Uther, before he died; and on the
night
When Uther in Tintagil past away
Moaning and wailing for an heir, the
two
Left the still King, and passing forth
to breathe,
Then from the castle gateway by the
chasm
Descending thro’ the dismal night—a
night
In which the bounds of heaven and
earth were lost—
Beheld, so high upon the dreary deeps
It seem’d in heaven, a ship, the shape
thereof
A dragon wing’d, and all from stem
to stern
Bright with a shining people on the
decks,

And gone as soon as seen. And then
the two
Dropt to the cove, and watch’d the
great sea fall,
Wave after wave, each mightier than
the last,
Till last, a ninth one, gathering half
the deep
And full of voices, slowly rose and
plunged
Roaring, and all the wave was in a
flame :
And down the wave and in the flame
was borne
A naked babe, and rode to Merlin’s
feet,
Who stooped and caught the babe, and
cried “ The King !
Here is an heir for Uther ! ” And the
fringe
Of that great breaker, sweeping up
the strand,
Lash’d at the wizard as he spake the
word,
And all at once all round him rose in
fire,
So that the child and he were clothed
in fire.
And presently thereafter follow’d calm,
Free sky and stars : “ And this same
child,” he said,
“ Is he who reigns; nor could I part
in peace
Till this were told.” And saying this
the seer
Went thro’ the strait and dreadful pass
of death,
Not ever to be question’d any more
Save on the further side; but when I
met
Merlin, and ask’d him if these things
were truth—
The shining dragon and the naked
child
Descending in the glory of the seas—
He laugh’d as is his wont, and an-
swer’d me
In riddling triplets of old time, and
said :

“ Rain, rain, and sun ! a rainbow
in the sky !
A young man will be wiser by and by ;

An old man's wit may wander ere he die.

Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow on the lea!

And truth is this to me, and that to thee;

And truth or clothed or naked let it be.

Rain, sun, and rain! and the free blossom blows:

Sun, rain, and sun! and where is he who knows?

From the great deep to the great deep he goes."

'So Merlin riddling anger'd me; but thou

Fear not to give this King thine only child,

Guinevere: so great bards of him will sing

Hereafter; and dark sayings from of old

Ranging and ringing thro' the minds of men,

And echo'd by old folk beside their fires

For comfort after their wage-work is done,

Speak of the King; and Merlin in our time

Hath spoken also, not in jest, and sworn

Tho' men may wound him that he will not die,

But pass, again to come; and then or now

Utterly smite the heathen underfoot,

Till these and all men hail him for their king.'

She spake and King Leodogran rejoiced,

But musing 'Shall I answer yea or nay?'

Doubted, and drowsed, nodded and slept, and saw,

Dreaming, a slope of land that ever grew,

Field after field, up to a height, the peak

Haze-hidden, and thereon a phantom king,

Now looming, and now lost; and on the slope

The sword rose, the hind fell, the herd was driven,

Fire glimpsed; and all the land from roof and rick,

In drifts of smoke before a rolling wind,

Stream'd to the peak, and mingled with the haze

And made it thicker; while the phantom king

Sent out at times a voice; and here or there

Stood one who pointed toward the voice, the rest

Slew on and burnt, crying, 'No king of ours,

No son of Uther, and no king of ours;'

Till with a wink his dream was changed, the haze

Descended, and the solid earth became

As nothing, but the King stood out in heaven,

Crown'd. And Leodogran awoke, and sent

Ulfius, and Brastias and Bedivere,

Back to the court of Arthur answering yea.

Then Arthur charged his warrior whom he loved

And honor'd most, Sir Lancelot, to ride forth

And bring the Queen;—and watch'd him from the gates:

And Lancelot past away among the flowers,

(For then was latter April) and return'd

Among the flowers, in May, with Guinevere.

To whom arrived, by Dubric the high saint,

Chief of the church in Britain, and before

The staliest of her altar-shrines, the King

That morn was married, while in stainless white,

The fair beginners of a nobler time,

And glorying in their vows and him, his knights

Stood round him, and rejoicing in his joy.

Far shone the fields of May thro' open
door,
The sacred altar blossom'd white with
May,
The Sun of May descended on their
King,
They gazed on all earth's beauty in
their Queen,
Roll'd incense, and there past along
the hymns
A voice as of the waters, while the two
Sware at the shrine of Christ a death-
less love :
And Arthur said, ' Behold, thy doom is
mine.
Let chance what will, I love thee to
the death !'
To whom the Queen replied with
drooping eyes,
' King and my lord, I love thee to the
death !'
And holy Dubric spread his hands and
spake,
' Reign ye, and live and love, and make
the world
Other, and may thy Queen be one with
thee,
And all this Order of thy Table Round
Fulfil the boundless purpose of their
King !'

So Dubric said ; but when they left
the shrine
Great Lords from Rome before the
portal stood,
In scornful stillness gazing as they
past ;
Then while they paced a city all on
fire
With sun and cloth of gold, the trum-
pets blew,
And Arthur's knighthood sang before
the King :—

' Blow trumpet, for the world is
white with May ;
Blow trumpet, the long night hath
roll'd away !
Blow thro' the living world—" Let the
King reign."

' Shall Rome or Heathen rule in
Arthur's realm ?

Flash brand and lance, fall battleaxe
upon helm,
Fall battleaxe, and flash brand ! Let
the King reign.

' Strike for the King and live ! his
knights have heard
That God hath told the King a secret
word.
Fall battleaxe, and flash brand ! Let
the King reign.

' Blow trumpet ! he will lift us from
the dust.
Blow trumpet ! live the strength and
die the lust !
Clang battleaxe, and clash brand !
Let the King reign.

' Strike for the King and die ! and
if thou diest,
The King is King, and ever wills the
highest.
Clang battleaxe, and clash brand !
Let the King reign.

' Blow, for our Sun is mighty in his
May !
Blow, for our Sun is mightier day by
day !
Clang battleaxe, and clash brand !
Let the King reign.

' The King will follow Christ, and
we the King
In whom high God hath breathed a
secret thing.
Fall battleaxe, and flash brand ! Let
the King reign.'

So sang the knighthood, moving to
their hall.
There at the banquet those great
Lords from Rome,
The slowly-fading mistress of the
world,
Strode in, and claim'd their tribute as
of yore.
But Arthur spake, ' Behold, for these
have sworn
To wage my wars, and worship me
their King ;

The old order changeth, yielding
place to new;
And we that fight for our fair father
Christ,
Seeing that ye be grown too weak and
old
To drive the heathen from your
Roman wall,
No tribute will we pay: ' so those
great lords
Drew back in wrath, and Arthur
strove with Rome.

And Arthur and his knighthood for
a space
Were all one will, and thro' that
strength the King
Drew in the petty principdoms under
him,
Fought, and in twelve great battles
overcame
The heathen hordes and made a realm
and reign'd.

THE ROUND TABLE.

GARETH AND LYNETTE.
THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT.
GERAINT AND ENID.
BALIN AND BALAN.
MERLIN AND VIVIEN.

LANCELOT AND ELAINE.
THE HOLY GRAIL.
PELLEAS AND ETTARRE.
THE LAST TOURNAMENT.
GUINEVERE.

GARETH AND LYNETTE.

THE last tall son of Lot and Belli-
cent,
And tallest, Gareth, in a showerful
spring
Stared at the spate. A slender-
shafted Pine
Lost footing, fell, and so was whirl'd
away.
'How he went down,' said Gareth,
'as a false knight
Or evil king before my lance if lance
Were mine to use—O senseless cata-
ract,
Bearing all down in thy precipitancy—
And yet thou art but swollen with
cold snows
And mine is living blood: thou dost
His will,
The Maker's, and not knowest, and I
that know,
Have strength and wit, in my good
mother's hall
Linger with vacillating obedience,
Prison'd, and kept and coax'd and
whistled to—
Since the good mother holds me still
a child!
Good mother is bad mother unto me!
A worse were better; yet no worse
would I.

Heaven yield her for it, but in me put
force
To weary her ears with one continu-
ous prayer,
Until she let me fly discaged to sweep
In ever-highering eagle-circles up
To the great Sun of Glory, and thence
swoop
Down upon all things base, and dash
them dead,
A knight of Arthur, working out his
will,
To cleanse the world. Why, Gawain,
when he came
With Modred hither in the summer-
time,
Ask'd me to tilt with him, the proven
knight.
Modred for want of worthier was the
judge.
Then I so shook him in the saddle,
he said,
"Thou hast half prevail'd against
me," said so—he—
Tho' Modred biting his thin lips was
mute,
For he is always sullen: what care I?

And Gareth went, and hovering
round her chair
Ask'd, 'Mother, tho' ye count me
still the child,

Sweet mother, do ye love the child ?'

She laugh'd,

'Thou art but a wild-geese to question it.'

'Then, mother, an ye love the child,' he said,

'Being a goose and rather tame than wild,

Hear the child's story.' 'Yea, my well-beloved,

An 'twere but of the goose and golden eggs.'

And Gareth answer'd her with kindling eyes,

'Nay, nay, good mother, but this egg of mine

Was finer gold than any goose can lay;

For this an Eagle, a royal Eagle, laid Almost beyond eye-reach, on such a palm

As glitters gilded in thy Book of Hours.

And there was ever haunting round the palm

A lusty youth, but poor, who often saw

The splendor sparkling from aloft, and thought

"An I could climb and lay my hand upon it,

Then were I wealthier than a leash of kings."

But ever when he reach'd a hand to climb,

One, that had loved him from his childhood, caught

And stay'd him, "Climb not lest thou break thy neck,

I charge thee by my love," and so the boy,

Sweet mother, neither clomb, nor brake his neck,

But brake his very heart in pining for it,

And past away.'

To whom the mother said,

'True love, sweet son, had risk'd himself and climb'd,

And handed down the golden treasure to him.'

And Gareth answer'd her with kindling eyes,

'Gold? said I gold?—ay then, why he, or she,

Or whosoe'er it was, or half the world Had ventured—*had* the thing I spake of been

Mere gold—but this was all of that true steel,

Whereof they forged the brand Excalibur,

And lightnings play'd about it in the storm,

And all the little fowl were flurried at it, And there were cries and clashing in

the nest, That sent him from his senses: let me go.'

Then Bellicent bemoan'd herself and said,

'Hast thou no pity upon my loneliness?

Lo, where thy father Lot beside the hearth

Lies like a log, and all but smoulder'd out!

For ever since when traitor to the King

He fought against him in the Barons' war,

And Arthur gave him back his territory,

His age hath slowly droopt, and now lies there

A yet-warm corpse, and yet unburiable,

No more; nor sees, nor hears, nor speaks, nor knows.

And both thy brethren are in Arthur's hall,

Albeit neither loved with that full love I feel for thee, nor worthy such a love:

Stay therefore thou; red berries charm the bird,

And thee, mine innocent, the jousts, the wars,

Who never knewest finger-ache, nor pang

Of wrench'd or broken limb—an often chance

In those brain-stunning shocks, and tourney-falls,

Frights to my heart; but stay: follow
 the deer
 By these tall firs and our fast-falling
 burns;
 So make thy manhood mightier day
 by day;
 Sweet is the chase: and I will seek
 thee out
 Some comfortable bride and fair, to
 grace
 Thy climbing life, and cherish my
 prone year,
 Till falling into Lot's forgetfulness
 I know not thee, myself, nor anything.
 Stay, my best son! ye are yet more
 boy than man.

Then Gareth, 'An ye hold me yet
 for child,
 Hear yet once more the story of the
 child.
 For, mother, there was once a King,
 like ours.
 The prince his heir, when tall and
 marriageable,
 Ask'd for a bride; and thereupon the
 King
 Set two before him. One was fair,
 strong, arm'd—
 But to be won by force—and many
 men
 Desired her; one, good lack, no man
 desired.
 And these were the conditions of the
 King:
 That save he won the first by force, he
 needs
 Must wed that other, whom no man
 desired,
 A red-faced bride who knew herself so
 vile,
 That evermore she long'd to hide her-
 self,
 Nor fronted man or woman, eye to
 eye—
 Yea—some she cleaved to, but they
 died of her.
 And one—they call'd her Fame; and
 one,—O Mother,
 How can ye keep me tether'd to you—
 Shame.
 Man am I grown, a man's work must
 I do.

Follow the deer? follow the Christ;
 the King,
 Live pure, speak true, right wrong,
 follow the King—
 Else, wherefore born?'

To whom the mother said,
 'Sweet son, for there be many who
 deem him not,
 Or will not deem him, wholly proven
 King—
 Albeit in mine own heart I knew him
 King,
 When I was frequent with him in my
 youth,
 And heard him Kingly speak, and
 doubted him
 No more than he, himself; but felt
 him mine,
 Of closest kin to me: yet—wilt thou
 leave
 Thine easeful bidding here, and risk
 thine all,
 Life, limbs, for one that is not proven
 King?
 Stay, till the cloud that settles round
 his birth
 Hath lifted but a little. Stay, sweet
 son.'

And Gareth answer'd quickly, 'Not
 an hour,
 So that ye yield me—I will walk thro'
 fire,
 Mother, to gain it—your full leave to
 go.
 Not proven, who swept the dust of
 ruin'd Rome
 From off the threshold of the realm,
 and crush'd
 The Idolaters, and made the people
 free?
 Who should be King save him who
 makes us free?'

So when the Queen, who long had
 sought in vain
 To break him from the intent to
 which he grew,
 Found her son's will unwaveringly
 one,
 She answer'd craftily, 'Will ye walk
 thro' fire?'

Who walks thro' fire will hardly heed
the smoke.

Ay, go then, an ye must: only one
proof,

Before thou ask the King to make
thee knight,

Of thine obedience and thy love to
me,

Thy mother,—I demand.'

And Gareth cried,

'A hard one, or a hundred, so I go.

Nay—quick! the proof to prove me to
the quick!'

But slowly spake the mother looking
at him,

'Prince, thou shalt go disguised to
Arthur's hall,

And hire thyself to serve for meats
and drinks

Among the scullions and the kitchen-
knaves,

And those that hand the dish across
the bar.

Nor shalt thou tell thy name to any-
one.

And thou shalt serve a twelvemonth
and a day.'

For so the Queen believed that
when her son

Beheld his only way to glory lead

Low down thro' villain kitchen-
vassalage,

Her own true Gareth was too princely-
proud

To pass thereby; so should he rest
with her,

Closed in her castle from the sound
of arms.

Silent awhile was Gareth, then
replied,

'The thrall in person may be free in
soul,

And I shall see the jousts. Thy son
am I,

And since thou art my mother, must
obey.

I therefore yield me freely to thy will;
For hence will I, disguised, and hire
myself

To serve with scullions and with
kitchen-knaves;

Nor tell my name to any—no, not the
King.'

Gareth awhile linger'd. The moth-
er's eye

Full of the wistful fear that he would go,
And turning toward him wheresoe'er

he turn'd,
Perplext his outward purpose, till an
hour,

When waken'd by the wind which
with full voice

Swept bellowing thro' the darkness on
to dawn,

He rose, and out of slumber calling
two

That still had tended on him from his
birth,

Before the wakeful mother heard him,
went.

The three were clad like tillers of
the soil.

Southward they set their faces. The
birds made

Melody on branch, and melody in mid
air.

The damp hill-slopes were quicken'd
into green,

And the live green had kindled into
flowers,

For it was past the time of Easterday.

So, when their feet were planted on
the plain

That broaden'd toward the base of
Camelot,

Far off they saw the silver-misty morn
Rolling her smoke about the Royal

mount,
That rose between the forest and the
field.

At times the summit of the high city
flash'd;

At times the spires and turrets half-
way down

Prick'd thro' the mist; at times the
great gate shone

Only, that open'd on the field below:
Anon, the whole fair city had disap-
pear'd.

Then those who went with Gareth
 were amazed,
 One crying, 'Let us go no further, lord.
 Here is a city of Enchanters, built
 By fairy Kings.' The second echo'd
 him,
 'Lord, we have heard from our wise
 man at home
 To Northward, that this King is not
 the King,
 But only changeling out of Fairyland,
 Who drave the heathen hence by
 sorcery
 And Merlin's glamour.' Then the first
 again,
 'Lord, there is no such city any-
 where,
 But all a vision.'

Gareth answer'd them
 With laughter, swearing he had gla-
 mour enow
 In his own blood, his principedom,
 youth and hopes,
 To plunge old Merlin in the Arabian
 sea;
 So push'd them all unwilling toward
 the gate.
 And there was no gate like it under
 heaven.
 For barefoot on the keystone, which
 was lined
 And rippled like an ever-fleeting wave,
 The Lady of the Lake stood: all her
 dress
 Wept from her sides as water flowing
 away;
 But like the cross her great and goodly
 arms
 Stretch'd under all the cornice and
 upheld:
 And drops of water fell from either
 hand;
 And down from one a sword was hung,
 from one
 A censer, either worn with wind and
 storm;
 And o'er her breast floated the sacred
 fish;
 And in the space to left of her, and
 right,
 Were Arthur's wars in weird devices
 done,

New things and old co-twisted, as if
 Time
 Were nothing, so inveterately, that
 men
 Were giddy gazing there; and over all
 High on the top were those three
 Queens, the friends
 Of Arthur, who should help him at his
 need.

Then those with Gareth for so long
 a space
 Stared at the figures, that at last it
 seem'd
 The dragon-boughts and elvish em-
 blemings
 Began to move, sethe, twine and
 curl: they call'd
 To Gareth, 'Lord, the gateway is alive.

And Gareth likewise on them fixt
 his eyes
 So long, that ev'n to him they seem'd
 to move.
 Out of the city a blast of music peal'd.
 Back from the gate started the three,
 to whom
 From out thereunder came an ancient
 man,
 Long-bearded, saying, 'Who be ye, my
 sons?'

Then Gareth, 'We be tillers of the
 soil,
 Who leaving share in furrow come to
 see
 The glories of our King: but these, my
 men,
 (Your city moved so weirdly in the
 mist)
 Doubt if the King be King at all, or
 come
 From Fairyland; and whether this be
 built
 By magic, and by fairy. Kings and
 Queens;
 Or whether there be any city at all,
 Or all a vision: and this music now
 Hath scared them both, but tell thou
 these the truth.'

Then that old Seer made answer
 playing on him

And saying, 'Son, I have seen the
good ship sail
Keel upward, and mast downward, in
the heavens,
And solid turrets topsy-turvy in air :
And here is truth ; but an it please
thee not,
Take thou the truth as thou hast told
it me.
For truly as thou sayest, a Fairy
King
And Fairy Queens have built the city,
son ;
They came from out a sacred moun-
tain-cleft
Toward the sunrise, each with harp in
hand,
And built it to the music of their
harps.
And, as thou sayest, it is enchanted,
son,
For there is nothing in it as it seems
Saving the King ; tho' some there be
that hold
The King a shadow, and the city real :
Yet take thou heed of him, for, so thou
pass
Beneath this archway, then wilt thou
become
A thrall to his enchantments, for the
King
Will bind thee by such vows, as is a
shame
A man should not be bound by, yet the
which
No man can keep ; but, so thou dread
to swear,
Pass not beneath this gateway, but
abide
Without, among the cattle of the field.
For an ye heard a music, like enow
They are building still, seeing the city
is built
To music, therefore never built at all,
And therefore built for ever.'

Gareth spake
own beard
That looks as white as utter truth, and
seems
Wellnigh as long as thou art statured
tall !

Why mockest thou the stranger that
hath been
To thee fair-spoken ?'

But the Seer replied,
' Know ye not then the Riddling of the
Bards ?
" Confusion, and illusion, and relation,
Elusion, and occasion, and evasion " ?
I mock thee not but as thou mockest
me,
And all that see thee, for thou art not
who
Thou seemest, but I know thee who
thou art.
And now thou goest up to mock the
King,
Who cannot brook the shadow of any
lie.'

Unmockingly the mocker ending
here
Turn'd to the right, and past along the
plain ;
Whom Gareth looking after said, ' My
men,
Our one white lie sits like a little ghost
Here on the threshold of our enter-
prise.
Let love be blamed for it, not she,
nor I :
Well, we will make amends.'

With all good cheer
He spake and laugh'd, then enter'd
with his twain
Camelot, a city of shadowy palaces
And stately, rich in emblem and the
work
Of ancient kings who did their days in
stone ;
Which Merlin's hand, the Mage at
Arthur's court,
Knowing all arts, had touch'd, and
everywhere
At Arthur's ordinance, tipt with lessen-
ing peak
And pinnacle, and had made it spire
to heaven.
And ever and anon a knight would
pass
Outward, or inward to the hall : his
arms

Clash'd; and the sound was good to
Gareth's ear.

And out of bower and casement shyly
glanced

Eyes of pure women, wholesome stars
of love;

And all about a healthful people stept
As in the presence of a gracious king.

Then into hall Gareth ascending
heard

A voice, the voice of Arthur, and be-
held

Far over heads in that long-vaulted
hall

The splendor of the presence of the
King

Throned, and delivering doom—and
look'd no more—

But felt his young heart hammering in
his ears,

And thought, 'For this half-shadow of
a lie

The truthful King will doom me when
I speak.'

Yet pressing on, tho' all in fear to find
Sir Gawain or Sir Modred, saw nor
one

Nor other, but in all the listening eyes
Of those tall knights, that ranged

about the throne,
Clear honor shining like the dewy

star
Of dawn, and faith in their great

King, with pure
Affection, and the light of victory,

And glory gain'd, and evermore to
gain.

Then came a widow crying to the
King,

'A boon, Sir King! Thy father,
Uther, reft

From my dead lord a field with vio-
lence:

For howsoe'er at first he proffer'd
gold,

Yet, for the field was pleasant in our
eyes,

We yielded not; and then he reft us
of it

Perforce, and left us neither gold nor
field.'

Said Arthur, 'Whether would ye?
gold or field?'

To whom the woman weeping, Nay
my lord,

The field was pleasant in my husband's
eye.'

And Arthur, 'Have thy pleasant
field again,

And thrice the gold for Uther's use
thereof,

According to the years. No boon is
here,

But justice, so thy say be proven true.
Accursed, who from the wrongs his

father did
Would shape himself a right!'

And while she past,
Came yet another widow crying to
him,

'A boon, Sir King! Thine enemy,
King, am I.

With thine own hand thou slewest my
dear lord,

A knight of Uther in the Barons'
war,

When Lôt and many another rose and
fought

Against thee, saying thou wert basely
born.

I held with these, and loathe to ask
thee aught.

Yet lo! my husband's brother had my
son

Thrall'd in his castle, and hath
starved him dead;

And standeth seized of that inherit-
ance

Which thou that slewest the sire hast
left the son.

So tho' I scarce can ask it thee for
hate,

Grant me some knight to do the battle
for me,

Kill the foul thief, and wreak me for
my son.'

Then strode a good knight forward,
crying to him,

'A boon, Sir King! I am her kinsman,
I.

Give me to right her wrong, and slay
the man.'

Then came Sir Kay, the seneschal,
and cried,
'A boon, Sir King! ev'n that thou
grant her none,
This railer, that hath mock'd thee in
full hall—
None; or the wholesome boon of gyve
and gag.'

But Arthur, 'We sit King, to help
the wrong'd
Thro' all our realm. The woman
loves her lord.
Peace to thee, woman, with thy loves
and hates!
The kings of old had doom'd thee to
the flames,
Aurelius Emrys would have scourged
thee dead,
And Uther slit thy tongue: but get
thee hence—
Lest that rough humor of the kings
of old
Return upon me! Thou that art her
kin,
Go likewise; lay him low and slay
him not,
But bring him here, that I may judge
the right,
According to the justice of the King:
Then, be he guilty, by that deathless
King
Who lived and died for men, the man
shall die.'

Then came in hall the messenger of
Mark,
A name of evil savor in the land,
The Cornish king. In either hand he
bore
What dazzled all, and shone far-off as
shines
A field of charlock in the sudden
sun
Between two showers, a cloth of palest
gold,
Which down he laid before the throne,
and knelt,
Delivering, that his lord, the vassal
king,
Was ev'n upon his way to Camelot;
For having heard that Arthur of his
grace

Had made his goodly cousin, Tristram,
knight,
And, for himself was of the greater
state,
Being a king, he trusted his liege-lord
Would yield him this large honor all
the more;
So pray'd him well to accept this cloth
of gold,
In token of true heart and fealty.

Then Arthur cried to rend the
cloth, to rend
In pieces, and so cast it on the hearth.
An oak-tree smoulder'd there. 'The
goodly knight!
What! shall the shield of Mark stand
among these?'
For, midway down the side of that
long hall
A stately pile,—whereof along the
front,
Some blazon'd, some but carven, and
some blank,
There ran a treble range of stony
shields,—
Rose, and high-arching overbrow'd
the hearth.
And under every shield a knight was
named:
For this was Arthur's custom in his
hall;
When some good knight had done one
noble deed,
His arms were carven only; but if
twain
His arms were blazon'd also; but if
none,
The shield was blank and bare with-
out a sign
Saving the name beneath; and Gareth
saw
The shield of Gawain blazon'd rich
and bright,
And Modred's blank as death; and
Arthur cried
To rend the cloth and cast it on the
hearth.

'More like are we to reave him of
his crown
Than make him knight because men
call him king.

The kings we found, ye know we stay'd
 their hands
 From war among themselves, but left
 them kings;
 Of whom were any bounteous, merci-
 ful,
 Truth-speaking, brave, good livers,
 them we enroll'd
 Among us, and they sit within our hall.
 But Mark hath tarnish'd the great
 name of king,
 As Mark would sully the low state of
 churl:
 And, seeing he hath sent us cloth of
 gold,
 Return, and meet, and hold him from
 our eyes,
 Lest we should lap him up in cloth of
 lead,
 Silenced for ever—craven—a man of
 plots,
 Craft, poisonous counsels, wayside
 ambushings—
 No fault of thine: let Kay the seneschal
 Look to thy wants, and send thee
 satisfied—
 Accursed, who strikes nor lets the
 hand be seen!'

And many another suppliant crying
 came
 With noise of ravage wrought by beast
 and man,
 And evermore a knight would ride
 away.

Last, Gareth leaning both hands
 heavily
 Down on the shoulders of the twain,
 his men,
 Approach'd between them toward the
 King, and ask'd,
 'A boon, Sir King (his voice was all
 ashamed),
 For see ye not how weak and hunger-
 worn
 I seem—leaning on these? grant me
 to serve
 For meat and drink among thy
 kitchen-knaves
 A twelvemonth and a day, nor seek
 my name.
 Hereafter I will fight.'

To him the King,
 'A goodly youth and worth a goodlier
 boon!
 But so thou wilt no goodlier, then
 must Kay,
 The master of the meats and drinks,
 be thine.'

He rose and past; then Kay, a man
 of mien
 Wan-sallow as the plant that feels it-
 self
 Root-bitten by white lichen,

'Lo ye now!
 This fellow hath broken from some
 Abbey, where,
 God wot, he had not beef and brewis
 enow,
 However that might chance! but an
 he work,
 Like any pigeon will I cram his crop,
 And sleeker shall he shine than any
 hog.'

Then Lancelot standing near, 'Sir
 Seneschal,
 Sleuth-hound thou knowest, and gray,
 and all the hounds;
 A horse thou knowest, a man thou
 dost not know:
 Broad brows and fair, a fluent hair
 and fine,
 High nose, a nostril large and fine,
 and hands
 Large, fair and fine!—Some young
 lad's mystery—
 But, or from sheepecot or king's hall,
 the boy
 Is noble-natured. Treat him with all
 grace,
 Lest he should come to shame thy
 judging of him.'

Then Kay, 'What murmurest thou
 of mystery?
 Think ye this fellow will poison the
 King's dish?
 Nay, for he spake too fool-like:
 mystery!
 Tut, an the lad were noble, he had ask'd
 For horse and armor: fair and fine,
 forsooth!

Sir Fine-face, Sir Fair-hands? but see
thou to it
That thine own fineness, Lancelot,
some fine day
Undo thee not—and leave my man to
me.'

So Gareth all for glory underwent
The sooty yoke of kitchen-vassal-
age;
Ate with young lads his portion by the
door,
And couch'd at night with grimy
kitchen-knaves.
And Lancelot ever spake him pleas-
antly,
But Kay the seneschal, who loved him
not,
Would hustle and harry him, and
labor him
Beyond his comrade of the hearth,
and set
To turn the broach, draw water, or
hew wood,
Or grosser tasks; and Gareth bow'd
himself
With all obedience to the King, and
wrought
All kind of service with a noble ease
That graced the lowliest act in doing
it.
And when the thralls had talk among
themselves,
And one would praise the love that
linkt the King
And Lancelot—how the King had
saved his life
In battle twice, and Lancelot once the
King's—
For Lancelot was the first in Tourna-
ment,
But Arthur mightiest on the battle-
field—
Gareth was glad. Or if some other
told,
How once the wandering forester at
dawn,
Far over the blue tarns and hazy seas,
On *Caer-Eryri's* highest found the
King,
A naked babe, of whom the Prophet
spake,
He passes to the Isle Avilion,

He passes and is heal'd and cannot
die'—
Gareth was glad. But if their talk
were foul,
Then would he whistle rapid as any
lark,
Or carol some old roundelay, and so
loud
That first they mock'd, but, after,
reverenced him.
Or Gareth telling some prodigious tale
Of knights, who sliced a red life-
bubbling way
Thro' twenty folds of twisted dragon,
held
All in a gap-mouth'd circle his good
mates
Lying or sitting round him, idle hands,
Charm'd; till Sir Kay, the seneschal,
would come
Blustering upon them, like a sudden
wind
Among dead leaves, and drive them
all apart.
Or when the thralls had sport among
themselves,
So there were any trial of mastery,
He, by two yards in casting bar or
stone
Was counted best; and if there
chanced a joust,
So that Sir Kay nodded him leave to
go,
Would hurry thither, and when he
saw the knights
Clash like the coming and retiring
wave,
And the spear spring, and good horse
reel, the boy
Was half beyond himself for ecstasy.

So for a month he wrought among
the thralls;
But in the weeks that follow'd, the
good Queen,
Repentant of the word she made him
swear,
And saddening in her childless cas-
tle, sent,
Between the in-crescent and de-
crescent moon,
Arms for her son, and loosed him
from his vow.

This, Gareth hearing from a squire
 of Lot
 With whom he used to play at tour-
 ney once,
 When both were children, and in
 lonely haunts
 Would scratch a ragged oval on the
 sand,
 And each at either dash from either
 end—
 Shame never made girl redder than
 Gareth joy.
 He laugh'd; he sprang. 'Out of the
 smoke, at once
 I leap from Satan's foot to Peter's
 knee—
 These news be mine, none other's—
 nay, the King's—
 Descend into the city:' whereon he
 sought
 The King alone, and found, and told
 him all.

'I have stagger'd thy strong Gawain
 in a tilt
 For pastime; yea, he said it: joust
 can I.
 Make me thy knight—in secret! let
 my name
 Be hidd'n, and give me the first quest,
 I spring
 Like flame from ashes.'

Here the King's calm eye
 Fell on, and check'd, and made him
 flush, and bow
 Lowly, to kiss his hand, who answer'd
 him,
 'Son, the good mother let me know
 thee here,
 And sent her wish that I would yield
 thee thine.
 Make thee my knight? my knights are
 sworn to vows
 Of utter hardihood, utter gentleness,
 And, loving, utter faithfulness in love,
 And uttermost obedience to the King.'

Then Gareth, lightly springing from
 his knees,
 'My King, for hardihood I can prom-
 ise thee.
 For uttermost obedience make demand

Of whom ye gave me to, the Seneschal,
 No mellow master of the meats and
 drinks!
 And as for love, God wot, I love not
 yet,
 But love I shall, God willing.'

And the King—
 'Make thee my knight in secret? yea,
 but he,
 Our noblest brother, and our truest
 man,
 And one with me in all, he needs
 must know.'

'Let Lancelot know, my King, let
 Lancelot know,
 Thy noblest and thy truest!'

And the King—
 'But wherefore would ye men should
 wonder at you?
 Nay, rather for the sake of me, their
 King,
 And the deed's sake my knighthood
 do the deed,
 Than to be noised of.'

Merrily Gareth ask'd,
 'Have I not earn'd my cake in baking
 of it?
 Let be my name until I make my
 name!
 My deeds will speak: it is but for a
 day.'
 So with a kindly hand on Gareth's
 arm
 Smiled the great King, and half-unwill-
 ingly
 Loving his lusty youthhood yielded to
 him.
 Then, after summoning Lancelot
 privily,
 'I have given him the first quest: he
 is not proven.
 Look therefore when he calls for this
 in hall,
 Thou get to horse and follow him far
 away.
 Cover the lions on thy shield, and
 see
 Far as thou mayest, he be nor ta'en
 nor slain.'

Then that same day there past into
the hall
A damsel of high lineage, and a brow
May-blossom, and a cheek of apple-
blossom,
Hawk-eyes; and lightly was her slender
nose
Tip-tilted like the petal of a flower;
She into hall past with her page and
cried,

‘O King, for thou hast driven the
foe without,
See to the foe within! bridge, ford,
beset
By bandits, everyone that owns a tower
The Lord for half a league. Why sit
ye there?
Rest would I not, Sir King, an I were
king,
Till ev’n the lonest hold were all as
free
From cursed bloodshed, as thine altar-
cloth
From that best blood it is a sin to
spill.’

‘Comfort thyself,’ said Arthur, ‘I
nor mine
Rest: so my knighthood keep the
vows they swore,
The wastest moorland of our realm
shall be
Safe, damsel, as the centre of this hall.
What is thy name? thy need?’

‘My name?’ she said—
Lynette my name; noble; my need, a
knight
To combat for my sister, Lyonors,
A lady of high lineage, of great lands,
And comely, yea, and comelier than
myself.
She lives in Castle Perilous: a river
Runs in three loops about her living-
place;
And o’er it are three passings, and
three knights
Defend the passings, brethren, and a
fourth
And of that four the mightiest, holds
her stay’d
In her own castle, and so besieges her

To break her will, and make her wed
with him:
And but delays his purport till thou
send
To do the battle with him, thy chief
man
Sir Lancelot whom he trusts to over-
throw,
Then wed, with glory: but she will
not wed
Save whom she loveth, or a holy life.
Now therefore have I come for Lance-
lot.’

Then Arthur mindful of Sir Gareth
ask’d,
‘Damsel, ye know this Order lives to
crush
All wrongers of the Realm. But say,
these four,
Who be they? What the fashion of the
men?’

‘They be of foolish fashion, O Sir
King,
The fashion of that old knight-
errantry
Who ride abroad, and do but what
they will;
Courteous or bestial from the moment,
such
As have nor law nor king; and three
of these
Proud in their fantasy call themselves
the Day,
Morning-Star, and Noon-Sun, and
Evening-Star,
Being strong fools; and never a whit
more wise
The fourth, who alway rideth arm’d in
black,
A huge man-beast of boundless sav-
agery.
He names himself the Night and
oftener Death,
And wears a helmet mounted with a
skull,
And bears a skeleton figured on his
arms,
To show that who may slay or scape
the three,
Slain by himself, shall enter endless
night.

And all these four be fools, but mighty
men,
And therefore am I come for Lance-
lot.'

Hereat Sir Gareth call'd from where
he rose,
A head with kindling eyes above the
throng,
'A boon, Sir King—this quest!' then
—for he mark'd
Kay near him groaning like a wounded
bull—
'Yea, King, thou knowest thy kitchen-
knave am I,
And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks
am I,
And I can topple over a hundred
such.
Thy promise, King,' and Arthur
glancing at him,
Brought down a momentary brow.
'Rough, sudden,
And pardonable, worthy to be
knight—
Go therefore,' and all hearers were
amazed.

But on the damsel's forehead shame,
pride, wrath
Slew the May-white: she lifted either
arm,
'Fie on thee, King! I ask'd for thy
chief knight,
And thou hast given me but a kitchen-
knave.'
Then ere a man in hall could stay her,
turn'd,
Fled down the lane of access to the
King,
Took horse, descended the slope
street, and past
The weird white gate, and paused
without, beside
The field of tourney, murmuring
'kitchen-knave.'

Now two great entries open'd from
the hall,
At one end one, that gave upon a
range
Of level pavement where the King
would pace

At sunrise, gazing over plain and
wood;
And down from this a lordly stairway
sloped
Till lost in blowing trees and tops of
towers;
And out by this main doorway past
the King.
But one was counter to the hearth,
and rose
High that the highest-crested helm
could ride
Therethro' nor graze: and by this
entry fled
The damsel in her wrath, and on to
this
Sir Gareth strode, and saw without
the door
King Arthur's gift, the worth of half a
town,
A warhorse of the best, and near it
stood
The two that out of north had follow'd
him:
This bare a maiden shield, a casque;
that held
The horse, the spear; whereat Sir
Gareth loosed
A cloak that dropt from collar-bone
to heel,
A cloth of roughest web, and cast it
down,
And from it like a fuel-smother'd fire,
That lookt half-dead, brake bright,
and flash'd as those
Dull-coated things, that making slide
apart
Their dusk wing-cases, all beneath
there burns
A jewell'd harness, ere they pass and
fly.
So Gareth ere he parted flash'd in
arms.
Then as he donn'd the helm, and took
the shield
And mounted horse and graspt a
spear, of grain
Storm-strengthen'd on a windy site,
and tipt
With trenchant steel, around him
slowly prest
The people, while from out of kitchen
came

The thralls in throng, and seeing who
had work'd
Lustier than any, and whom they
could but love,
Mounted in arms, threw up their caps
and cried,
'God bless the King, and all his
fellowship!'
And on thro' lanes of shouting Gareth
rode
Down the slope street, and past with-
out the gate.

So Gareth past with joy; but as the
cur
Pluckt from the cur he fights with, ere
his cause
Be cool'd by fighting, follows, being
named,
His owner, but remembers all, and
growls
Remembering, so Sir Kay beside the
door
Mutter'd in scorn of Gareth whom he
used
To harry and hustle.

'Bound upon a quest
With horse and arms—the King hath
past his time—
My scullion knave! Thralls to your
work again,
For an your fire be low ye kindle mine!
Will there be dawn in West and eve
in East?
Begone!—my knave!—belike and like
enow
Some old head-blow not heeded in his
youth
So shook his wits they wander in his
prime—
Crazed! How the villain lifted up
his voice,
Nor shamed to help himself a kitchen-
knave.
Tut: he was tame and meek enow with
me,
Till peacock'd up with Lancelot's
noticing.
Well—I will after my loud knave, and
learn
Whether he know me for his master
yet,

Out of the smoke he came, and so my
lance
Hold, by God's grace, he shall into the
mire—
Thence, if the King awaken from his
craze,
Into the smoke again.'

But Lancelot said,
'Kay, wherefore wilt thou go against
the King,
For that did never he whereon ye rail,
But ever meekly served the King in
thee?
Abide: take counsel; for this lad is
great
And lusty, and knowing both of lance
and sword.'
'Tut, tell not me,' said Kay, 'ye are
overfine
To mar stout knaves with foolish
courtesies.'
Then mounted, on thro' silent faces
rode
Down the slope city, and out beyond
the gate.

But by the field of tourney lingering
yet
Mutter'd the damsel, 'Wherefore did
the King
Scorn me? for, were Sir Lancelot
lackt, at least
He might have yielded to me one of
those
Who tilt for lady's love and glory here,
Rather than—O sweet heaven! O fie
upon him—
His kitchen-knave.'

To whom Sir Gareth drew
(And there were none but few goodlier
than he)
Shining in arms, 'Damsel, the quest is
mine.
Lead, and I follow.' She thereat, as
one
That smells a foul-flesh'd agaric in the
holt,
And deems it carrion of some wood-
land thing,
Or shrew, or weasel, nipt her slender
nose

With petulant thumb and finger, shrilling,
 'Hence!
 Avoid, thou smell'st all of kitchen-grease.
 And look who comes behind,' for there
 was Kay.
 'Knowest thou not me? thy master?
 I am Kay.
 We lack thee by the hearth.'

And Gareth to him,
 'Master no more! too well I know
 thee, ay—
 The most ungentle knight in Arthur's
 hall.'
 'Have at thee then,' said Kay: they
 shock'd, and Kay
 Fell shoulder-slipt, and Gareth cried
 again,
 'Lead, and I follow,' and fast away she
 fled.

But after sod and shingle ceased to
 fly
 Behind her, and the heart of her good
 horse
 Was nigh to burst with violence of the
 beat,
 Perforce she stay'd, and overtaken
 spoke.

'What doest thou, scullion, in my
 fellowship?
 Deem'st thou that I accept thee aught
 the more
 Or love thee better, that by some de-
 vice
 Full cowardly, or by mere unhappiness,
 Thou hast overthrown and slain thy
 master—thou!—
 Dish-washer and broach-turner, loon!
 —to me
 Thou smell'st all of kitchen as before.'

'Damsel,' Sir Gareth answer'd
 gently, 'say
 Whate'er ye will, but whatsoe'er ye say,
 I leave not till I finish this fair quest,
 Or die therefore.'

'Ay, wilt thou finish it?
 Sweet lord, how like a noble knight
 he talks!

The listening rogue hath caught the
 manner of it.
 But, knave, anon thou shalt be met
 with, knave,
 And then by such a one that thou for
 all
 The kitchen brewis that was ever supt
 Shalt not once dare to look him in the
 face.'

'I shall assay,' said Gareth with a
 smile
 That madden'd her, and away she
 flash'd again
 Down the long avenues of a boundless
 wood,
 And Gareth, following was again be-
 knaved.

'Sir Kitchen-knave, I have miss'd
 the only way
 Where Arthur's men are set along the
 wood;
 The wood is nigh as full of thieves as
 leaves:
 If both be slain, I am rid of thee; but
 yet,
 Sir Scullion, canst thou use that spit
 of thine?
 Fight, an thou canst. I have miss'd
 the only way.'

So till the dusk that follow'd even-
 song
 Rode on the two, reviler and reviled;
 Then after one long slope was
 mounted, saw,
 Bowl-shaped, thro' tops of many
 thousand pines
 A gloomy-gladed hollow slowly sink
 To westward—in the deeps whereof a
 mere,
 Round as the red eye of an Eagle-owl,
 Under the half-dead sunset glared;
 and shouts
 Ascended, and there brake a serving-
 man
 Flying from out of the black wood, and
 crying,
 'They have bound my lord to cast him
 in the mere.'
 Then Gareth, 'Bound am I to right
 the wrong'd,

But straitlier bound am I to bide with thee.
And when the damsel spake contemptuously,
'Lead, and I follow,' Gareth cried again,
'Follow, I lead!' so down among the pines
He plunged; and there, blackshadow'd nigh the mere,
And mid-thigh-deep in bulrushes and reed,
Saw six tall men haling a seventh along,
A stone about his neck to drown him in it.
Three with good blows he quieted, but three
Fled thro' the pines; and Gareth loosed the stone
From off his neck, then in the mere beside
Tumbled it; oilily bubbled up the mere.
Last, Gareth loosed his bonds and on free feet
Set him, a stalwart Baron, Arthur's friend.

'Well that ye came, or else these caitiff rogues
Had wreak'd themselves on me; good cause is theirs
To hate me, for my wont hath ever been
To catch my thief, and then like vermin here
Drown him, and with a stone about his neck;
And under this wan water many of them
Lie rotting, but at night let go the stone,
And rise, and flickering in a grimly light
Dance on the mere. Good now, ye have saved a life
Worth somewhat as the cleanser of this wood.
And fain would I reward thee worshipfully.
What guerdon will ye?'

Gareth sharply spake,
'None! for the deed's sake have I done the deed,
In uttermost obedience to the King.
But wilt thou yield this damsel harbor-age?'

Whereat the Baron saying, 'I well believe
You be of Arthur's Table,' a light laugh
Broke from Lynette, 'Ay, truly of a truth,
And in a sort, being Arthur's kitchen-knave!—
But deem not I accept thee aught the more,
Scullion, for running sharply with thy spit
Down on a rout of craven foresters.
A thresher with his flail had scatter'd them.
Nay—for thou smellest of the kitchen still.
But an this lord will yield us harbor-age,
Well.'

So she spake. A league beyond the wood,
All in a full-fair manor and a rich,
His towers where that day a feast had been
Held in high hall, and many a viand left,
And many a costly cate, received the three.
And there they placed a peacock in his pride
Before the damsel, and the Baron set Gareth beside her, but at once she rose.

'Meseems, that here is much discourtesy,
Setting this knave, Lord Baron, at my side.
Hear me—this morn I stood in Arthur's hall,
And pray'd the King would grant me Lancelot
To fight the brotherhood of Day and Night—

The last a monster unsubduable
Of any save of him for whom I call'd—
Suddenly bawls this frontless kitchen-

knave,
"The quest is mine; thy kitchen-
knave am I,
And mighty thro' thy meats and
drinks am I."

Then Arthur all at once gone mad
replies,

"Go therefore," and so gives the
quest to him—

Him—here—a villain fitter to stick
swine

Than ride abroad redressing women's
wrong,

Or sit beside a noble gentlewoman.'

Then half-ashamed and part amazed,
the lord

Now look'd at one and now at other,
left

The damsel by the peacock in his
pride,

And, seating Gareth at another board,
Sat down beside him, ate and then
began.

'Friend, whether thou be kitchen-
knave, or not,

Or whether it be the maiden's fantasy,
And whether she be mad, or else the
King,

Or both or neither, or thyself be mad,
I ask not: but thou strikest a strong
stroke,

For strong thou art and goodly there-
withal,

And savor of my life; and therefore
now,

For here be mighty men to joust with,
weigh

Whether thou wilt not with thy dam-
sel back

To crave again Sir Lancelot of the
King.

Thy pardon; I but speak for thine
avail,

The savor of my life.'

And Gareth said,

'Full pardon, but I follow up the
quest,

Despite of Day and Night and Death
and Hell.'

So when, next morn, the lord whose
life he saved

Had, some brief space, convey'd them
on their way

And left them with God-speed, Sir
Gareth spake,

'Lead, and I follow.' Haughtily she
replied,

'I fly no more: I allow thee for an
hour.

Lion and stoat have isled together,
knave,

In time of flood. Nay, furthermore,
methinks

Some ruth is mine for thee. Back
wilt thou, fool?

For hard by here is one will overthrow
And slay thee: then will I to court
again,

And shame the King for only yielding
me

My champion from the ashes of his
hearth.'

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd
courteously,

'Say thou thy say, and I will do my
deed.

Allow me for mine hour, and thou
wilt find

My fortunes all as fair as hers who lay
Among the ashes and wedded the
King's son.'

Then to the shore of one of those
long loops

Wherethro' the serpent river coil'd,
they came.

Rough-thicketed were the banks and
steep; the stream

Full, narrow; this a bridge of single
arc

Took at a leap; and on the further
side

Arose a silk pavilion, gay with gold
In streaks and rays, and all Lent-lily
in hue,

Save that the dome was purple, and
above,



"HE THRICE HAD SENT A HERALD TO THE GATES."—Page 69.

Crimson, a slender banneret fluttering.
And therefore the lawless warrior
paced
Unarm'd, and calling, 'Damsel, is this
he,
The champion thou hast brought
from Arthur's hall?
For whom we let thee pass.' 'Nay,
nay,' she said,
'Sir Morning-Star. The King in
utter scorn
Of thee and thy much folly hath sent
thee here
His kitchen-knave: and look thou to
thyself:
See that he fall not on thee suddenly,
And slay thee unarm'd: he is not
knight but knave.'

Then at his call, 'O daughters of
the Dawn,
And servants of the Morning-Star,
approach,
Arm me,' from out the silken curtain-
folds
Bare-footed and bare-headed three
fair girls
In gilt and rosy raiment came: their
feet
In dewy grasses glisten'd; and the hair
All over glanced with dewdrop or
with gem
Like sparkles in the stone Avanturine.
These arm'd him in blue arms, and
gave a shield
Blue also, and thereon the morning
star.
And Gareth silent gazed upon the
knight,
Who stood a moment, ere his horse
was brought,
Glorying; and in the stream beneath
him, shone
Immingled with Heaven's azure
waveringly,
The gay pavilion and the naked feet,
His arms, the rosy raiment, and the
star.

Then she that watch'd him, 'Where-
fore stare ye so?
Thou shakest in thy fear: there yet is
time:

Flee down the valley before he get to
horse.
Who will cry shame? Thou art not
knight but knave.'

Said Gareth, 'Damsel, whether
knave or knight,
Far liefer had I fight a score of times
Than hear thee so missay me and
revile.
Fair words were best for him who
fights for thee;
But truly foul are better, for they send
That strength of anger thro' mine
arms, I know
That I shall overthrow him.'

And he that bore
The star, when mounted, cried from
o'er the bridge,
'A kitchen-knave, and sent in scorn
of me!
Such fight not I, but answer scorn
with scorn.
For this were shame to do him further
wrong
Than set him on his feet, and take his
horse
And arms, and so return him to the
King.
Come, therefore, leave thy lady lightly,
knave.
Avoid: for it beseemeth not a knave
To ride with such a lady.'

'Dog, thou liest.
I spring from loftier lineage than thine
own.'
He spake; and all at fiery speed the
two
Shock'd on the central bridge, and
either spear
Bent but not brake, and either knight
at once,
Hurl'd as a stone from out of a catapult
Beyond his horse's crupper and the
bridge,
Fell, as if dead; but quickly rose and
drew,
And Gareth lash'd so fiercely with his
brand
He drove his enemy backward down
the bridge,

The damsel crying, 'Well-stricken,
kitchen-knave!'
Till Gareth's shield was cloven; but
one stroke
Laid him that clove it grovelling on
the ground.

Then cried the fall'n, 'Take not
my life: I yield.'
And Gareth, 'So this damsel ask it of
me
Good—I accord it easily as a grace.'
She reddening, 'Insolent scullion: I
of thee?
I bound to thee for any favor ask'd!'
'Then shall he die.' And Gareth
there unlaced
His helmet as to slay him, but she
shriek'd,
'Be not so hardy, scullion, as to slay
One nobler than thyself.' 'Damsel,
thy charge
Is an abounding pleasure to me.
Knight,
Thy life is thine at her command.
Arise
And quickly pass to Arthur's hall,
and say
His kitchen-knave hath sent thee.
See thou crave
His pardon for thy breaking of his
laws.
Myself, when I return, will plead for
thee.
Thy shield is mine—farewell; and,
damsel, thou,
Lead, and I follow.'

And fast away she fled.
Then when he came upon her, spake,
'Methought,
Knave, when I watch'd thee striking
on the bridge
The savor of thy kitchen came upon
me
A little faintlier: but the wind hath
changed:
I scent it twenty-fold.' And then she
sang,
"O morning star" (not that tall felon
there
Whom thou by sorcery or unhappi-
ness

Or some device, hast foully over-
thrown),
"O morning star that smilest in the
blue,
O star, my morning dream hath proven
true,
Smile sweetly, thou! my love hath
smiled on me."

'But thou begone, take counsel, and
away,
For hard by here is one that guards a
ford—
The second brother in their fool's
parable—
Will pay thee all thy wages, and to
boot.
Care not for shame: thou art not
knight but knave.'

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd, laugh-
ingly,
'Parables? Hear a parable of the
knave.
When I was kitchen-knave among the
rest
Fierce was the hearth, and one of my
co-mates
Own'd a rough dog, to whom he cast
his coat,
"Guard it," and there was none to
meddle with it.
And such a coat art thou, and thee the
King
Gave me to guard, and such a dog am
I,
To worry, and not to flee—and—
knight or knave—
The knave that doth thee service as
full knight
Is all as good, meseems, as any knight
Toward thy sister's freeing.'

'Ay, Sir Knave!
Ay, knave, because thou striketh as a
knight,
Being but knave, I hate thee all the
more.'

'Fair damsel, you should worship
me the more,
That, being but knave, I throw thine
enemies.'

'Ay, ay,' she said, 'but thou shalt meet thy match.'

So when they touch'd the second riverloop,
Huge on a huge red horse, and all in mail
Burnish'd to blinding, shone the Noon-day Sun
Beyond a raging shallow. As if the flower,
That blows a globe of after arrowlets,
Ten thousand-fold had grown, flash'd the fierce shield,
All sun; and Gareth's eyes had flying blots
Before them when he turn'd from watching him.
He from beyond the roaring shallow roar'd,
'What doest thou, brother, in my marches here?'
And she athwart the shallow shrill'd again,
'Here is a kitchen-knave from Arthur's hall
Hath overthrown thy brother, and hath his arms.'
'Ugh!' cried the Sun, and visoring up a red
And cipher face of rounded foolishness,
Push'd horse across the foamings of the ford,
Whom Gareth met midstream: no room was there
For lance or tourney-skill: four strokes they struck
With sword, and these were mighty; the new knight
Had fear he might be shamed; but as the Sun
Heaved up a ponderous arm to strike the fifth,
The hoof of his horse slipt in the stream, the stream
Descended, and the Sun was wash'd away.

Then Gareth laid his lance athwart the ford;
So drew him home; but he that fought no more,

As being all bone-batter'd on the rock,
Yielded; and Gareth sent him to the King.

'Myself when I return will plead for thee.'

'Lead, and I follow.' Quietly she led.

'Hath not the good wind, damsel, changed again?'

'Nay, not a point: nor art thou victor here.

There lies a ridge of slate across the ford;

His horse thereon stumbled—ay, for I saw it.

"O Sun" (not this strong fool whom thou, Sir Knave,
Hast overthrown thro' mere unhappiness),

"O Sun, that wakenest all to bliss or pain,

O moon, that layest all to sleep again,
Shine sweetly: twice my love hath smiled on me.'

'What knowest thou of lovesong or of love?

Nay, nay, God wot, so thou wert nobly born,

Thou hast a pleasant presence. Yea, perchance,—

"O dewy flowers that open to the sun,

O dewy flowers that close when day is done,

Blow sweetly: twice my love hath smiled on me."

'What knowest thou of flowers, except, belike,

To garnish meats with? hath not our good King

Who lent me thee, the flower of kitchendom,

A foolish love for flowers? what stick ye round

The pasty? wherewithal deck the boar's head?

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Flowers? nay, the boar hath rose-maries and bay.

“O birds, that warble to the morning sky,
O birds that warble as the day goes by,
Sing sweetly: twice my love hath
smiled on me.”

‘What knowest thou of birds, lark,
mavis, merle,
Linnet? what dream ye when they
utter forth
May-music growing with the growing
light,
Their sweet sun-worship? these be for
the snare
(So runs thy fancy) these be for the
spit,
Larding and basting. See thou have
not now
Larded thy last, except thou turn and
fly.
There stands the third fool of their
allegory.’

For there beyond a bridge of treble
bow,
All in a rose-red from the west, and
all
Naked it seem’d, and glowing in the
broad
Deep-dimpled current underneath, the
knight,
That named himself the Star of Even-
ing, stood.

And Gareth, ‘Wherefore waits the
madman there
Naked in open dayshine?’ ‘Nay,’
she cried,
‘Not naked, only wrapt in harden’d
skins
That fit him like his own; and so ye
cleave
His armor off him, these will turn the
blade.’

Then the third brother shouted o’er
the bridge,
‘O brother-star, why shine ye here so
low?
Thy ward is higher up: but have ye
slain
The damsel’s champion?’ and the
damsel cried,

‘No star of thine, but shot from
Arthur’s heaven
With all disaster unto thine and
thee!
For both thy younger brethren have
gone down
Before this youth; and so wilt thou,
Sir Star;
Art thou not old?’

‘Old, damsel, old and hard,
Old, with the might and breath of
twenty boys.’
Said Gareth, ‘Old, and over-bold in
brag!
But that same strength which threw
the Morning Star
Can throw the Evening.’

Then that other blew
A hard and deadly note upon the
horn.
‘Approach and arm me!’ With slow
steps from out
An old storm-beaten, russet, many-
stain’d
Pavilion, forth a grizzled damsel
came,
And arm’d him in old arms, and
brought a helm
With but a drying evergreen for
crest,
And gave a shield whereon the Star of
Even
Half-tarnish’d and half-bright, his em-
blem, shone.
But when it glitter’d o’er the saddle-
bow,
They madly hurl’d together on the
bridge;
And Gareth overthrew him, lighted,
drew,
There met him drawn, and overthrew
him again,
But up like fire he started: and as
oft
As Gareth brought him grovelling on
his knees,
So many a time he vaulted up again;
Till Gareth panted hard, and his
great heart,
Foredooming all his trouble was in
vain,

Labor'd within him, for he seem'd as
 one
 That all in later, sadder age begins
 To war against ill uses of a life,
 But these from all his life arise, and
 cry,
 'Thou hast made us lords, and canst
 not put us down!'—
 He half despairs; so Gareth seem'd
 to strike
 Vainly, the damsel clamoring all the
 while,
 'Well done, knave-knight, well
 stricken, O good knight-knave—
 O knave, as noble as any of all the
 knights—
 Shame me not, shame me not. I have
 prophesied—
 Strike, thou art worthy of the Table
 Round—
 His arms are old, he trusts the
 harden'd skin—
 Strike—strike—the wind will never
 change again.'—
 And Gareth hearing ever stronglier
 smote,
 And hew'd great pieces of his armor
 off him,
 But lash'd in vain against the harden'd
 skin,
 And could not wholly bring him un-
 der, more
 Than loud Southwesterns, rolling
 ridge on ridge,
 The buoy that rides at sea, and dips
 and springs
 For ever; till at length Sir Gareth's
 brand
 Clash'd his, and brake it utterly to the
 hilt.
 'I have thee now;' but forth that
 other sprang,
 And, all unknightlike, writhed his wiry
 arms
 Around him, till he felt, despite his
 mail,
 Strangled, but straining ev'n his utter-
 most
 Cast, and so hurl'd him headlong o'er
 the bridge
 Down to the river, sink or swim, and
 cried,
 'Lead, and I follow.'

But the damsel said,
 'I lead no longer; ride thou at my
 side;
 Thou art the kingliest of all kitchen-
 knaves.

"O trefoil, sparkling on the rainy
 plain,
 O rainbow with three colors after
 rain,
 Shine sweetly: thrice my love hath
 smiled on me."

'Sir,—and, good faith, I fain had
 added—Knight,
 But that I heard thee call thyself a
 knave,—
 Shamed am I that I so rebuked,
 reviled,
 Missaid thee; noble I am; and thought
 the King
 Scorn'd me and mine; and now thy
 pardon, friend,
 For thou hast ever answer'd court-
 eously,
 And wholly bold thou art, and meek
 withal
 As any of Arthur's best, but, being
 knave,
 Hast mazed my wit: I marvel what
 thou art.

'Damsel,' he said, 'you be not all to
 blame,
 Saving that you mistrusted our good
 King
 Would handle scorn, or yield you,
 asking, one
 Not fit to cope your quest. You said
 your say;
 Mine answer was my deed. Good
 sooth! I hold
 He scarce is knight, yea but half-man,
 nor meet
 To fight for gentle damsel, he, who
 lets
 His heart be stirr'd with any foolish
 heat
 At any gentle damsel's waywardness.
 Shamed? care not! thy foul sayings
 fought for me:
 And seeing now thy words are fair,
 methinks

There rides no knight, not Lancelot,
his great self,
Hath force to quell me.'

Nigh upon that hour
When the lone henn forgets his melan-
choly,
Lets down his other leg, and stretching,
dreams
Of goodly supper in the distant pool,
Then turn'd the noble damsel smiling
at him,
And told him of a cavern hard at
hand,
Where bread and baken meats and
good red wine
Of Southland, which the Lady Lyonors
Had sent her coming champion, waited
him.

Anon they past a narrow comb
wherein
Were slabs of rock with figures,
knights on horse
Sculptured, and deckt in slowly-waning
hues.
'Sir Knave, my knight, a hermit once
was here,
Whose holy hand hath fashion'd on
the rock
The war of Time against the soul of
man.
And yon four fools have suck'd their
allegory
From these damp walls, and taken but
the form.
Know ye not these?' and Gareth lookt
and read—
In letters like to those the vexillary
Hath left crag-carven o'er the stream-
ing Gelt—
'PHOSPHORUS,' then 'MERIDIES'—
'HESPERUS'—
'NOX'—'MORS,' beneath five figures,
armed men,
Slab after slab, their faces forward
all,
And running down the Soul, a Shape
that fled
With broken wings, torn raiment and
loose hair,
For help and shelter to the hermit's
cave.

'Follow the faces, and we find it.
Look,
Who comes behind?'

For one—delay'd at first
Thro' helping back the dislocated Kay
To Camelot, then by what thereafter
chanced,
The damsel's headlong error thro' the
wood—
Sir Lancelot, having swum the river-
loops—
His blue shield-lions cover'd—softly
drew
Behind the twain, and when he saw
the star
Gleam, on Sir Gareth's turning to him,
cried,
'Stay, felon knight, I avenge me for
my friend.'
And Gareth crying prick'd against the
cry;
But when they closed—in a moment—
at one touch
Of that skill'd spear, the wonder of
the world—
Went sliding down so easily, and fell,
That when he found the grass within
his hands
He laugh'd; the laughter jarr'd upon
Lynette:
Harshly she ask'd him, 'Shamed and
overthrown,
And tumbled back into the kitchen-
knave,
Why laugh ye? that ye blew your boast
in vain?'
'Nay, noble damsel, but that I, the
son
Of old King Lot and good Queen Belli-
cent,
And victor of the bridges and the
ford,
And knight of Arthur, here lie thrown
by whom
I know not, all thro' mere unhappi-
ness—
Device and sorcery and unhappiness—
Out, sword; we are thrown!' And
Lancelot answer'd, 'Prince,
O Gareth—thro' the mere unhappiness
Of one who came to help thee, not to
harm,

Lancelot, and all as glad to find thee
whole,
As on the day when Arthur knighted
him.'

Then Gareth, 'Thou—Lancelot!—
thine the hand
That threw me? An some chance to
mar the boast
Thy brethren of thee make—which
could not chance—
Had sent thee down before a lesser
spear,
Shamed had I been, and sad—O Lancelot—thou!'

Whereat the maiden, petulant,
'Lancelot,
Why came ye not, when call'd? and
wherefore now
Come ye, not call'd? I gloried in my
knave,
Who being still rebuked, would answer still
Courteous as any knight—but now, if
knight,
The marvel dies, and leaves me fool'd
and trick'd,
And only wondering wherefore play'd
upon:
And doubtful whether I and mine be
scorn'd.
Where should be truth if not in
Arthur's hall,
In Arthur's presence? Knight, knave,
prince and fool,
I hate thee and forever.'

And Lancelot said,
'Blessed be thou, Sir Gareth! knight
art thou
To the King's best wish. O damsel,
be you wise
To call him shamed, who is but over-
thrown?
Thrown have I been, nor once, but
many a time.
Victor from vanquish'd issues at the
last,
And overthrower from being over-
thrown.
With sword we have not striven; and
thy good horse

And thou are weary; yet not less I
felt
Thy manhood thro' that wearied lance
of thine.
Well hast thou done; for all the stream
is freed,
And thou hast wreak'd his justice on
his foes,
And when reviled, hast answer'd gra-
ciously,
And makest merry when overthrown.
Prince, Knight,
Hail, Knight and Prince, and of our
Table Round!'

And then when turning to Lynette
he told
The tale of Gareth, petulantly she
said,
'Ay well—ay well—for worse than
being fool'd
Of others, is to fool one's self. A
cave,
Sir Lancelot, is hard by, with meats
and drinks
And forage for the horse, and flint for
fire.
But all about it flies a honeysuckle.
Seek, till we find.' And when they
sought and found,
Sir Gareth drank and ate, and all his
life
Past into sleep; on whom the maiden
gazed.
'Sound sleep be thine! sound cause
to sleep hast thou.
Wake lusty! Seem I not as tender
to him
As any mother? Ay, but such a one
As all day long hath rated at her
child,
And vex't his day, but blesses him
asleep—
Good lord, how sweetly smells the
honeysuckle
In the hush'd night, as if the world
were one
Of utter peace, and love, and gentle-
ness!
O Lancelot, Lancelot'—and she clapt
her hands—
'Full merry am I to find my goodly
knave

Is knight and noble. See now, sworn
 have I,
 Else yon black felon had not let me
 pass,
 To bring thee back to do the battle
 with him.
 Thus and thou goest, he will fight thee
 first;
 Who doubts thee victor? so will my
 knight-knave
 Miss the full flower of this accom-
 plishment.'

Said Lancelot, 'Peradventure he,
 you name,
 May know my shield. Let Gareth,
 an he will,
 Change his for mine, and take my
 charger, fresh,
 Not to be spurr'd, loving the battle
 as well
 As he that rides him.' 'Lancelot-
 like,' she said,
 'Courteous in this, Lord Lancelot, as
 in all.'

And Gareth, wakening, fiercely
 clutch'd the shield;
 'Ramp ye lance-splintering lions, on
 whom all spears
 Are rotten sticks! ye seem agape to
 roar!
 Yea, ramp and roar at leaving of
 your lord!—
 Care not, good beasts, so well I care
 for you.
 O noble Lancelot, from my hold on
 these
 Streams virtue—fire—thro' one that
 will not shame
 Even the shadow of Lancelot under
 shield.
 Hence: let us go.'

Silent the silent field
 They traversed. Arthur's harp tho'
 summer-wan,
 In counter motion to the clouds,
 allured
 The glance of Gareth dreaming on his
 liege.
 A star shot: 'Lo,' said Gareth, 'the
 foe falls!'

An owl whoopt: 'Hark the victor
 pealing there!'
 Suddenly she that rode upon his left
 Clung to the shield that Lancelot
 lent him, crying,
 'Yield, yield him this again: 'tis he
 must fight:
 I curse the tongue that all thro' yes-
 terday
 Reviled thee, and hath wrought on
 Lancelot now
 To lend thee horse and shield: won-
 ders ye have done;
 Miracles ye cannot: here is glory
 enow
 In having flung the three: I see thee
 maim'd,
 Mangled: I swear thou canst not
 fling the fourth.'

'And wherefore, damsel? tell me
 all ye know.
 You cannot scare me; nor rough
 face, or voice,
 Brute bulk of limb, or boundless
 savagery
 Appal me from the quest.'

'Nay, Prince,' she cried,
 'God wot, I never look'd upon the
 face,
 Seeing he never rides abroad by
 day;
 But watch'd him have I like a phan-
 tom pass
 Chilling the night: nor have I heard
 the voice.
 Always he made his mouthpiece of a
 page
 Who came and went, and still re-
 ported him
 As closing in himself the strength of
 ten,
 And when his anger tare him, massa-
 cring
 Man, woman, lad and girl—yea, the
 soft babe!
 Some hold that he hath swallow'd
 infant flesh,
 Monster! O Prince, I went for Lance-
 lot first,
 The quest is Lancelot's: give him
 back the shield.'

Said Gareth laughing, 'An he fight
for this,
Belike he wins it as the better man ;
Thus—and not else !'

But Lancelot on him urged
All the devisings of their chivalry
When one might meet a mightier
than himself ;
How best to manage horse, lance,
sword and shield,
And so fill up the gap where force
might fail
With skill and fineness. Instant
were his words.

Then Gareth, 'Here be rules. I
know but one—
To dash against mine enemy and to
win.
Yet have I watch'd thee victor in the
joust,
And seen thy way.' 'Heaven help
thee,' sigh'd Lynette.

Then for a space, and under cloud
that grew
To thunder-gloom palling all stars,
they rode
In converse till she made her palfrey
halt,
Lifted an arm, and softly whisper'd
'There.'
And all the three were silent seeing,
pitch'd
Beside the Castle Perilous on flat
field,
A huge pavilion like a mountain
peak
Sunder the glooming crimson on the
marge,
Black, with black banner, and a long
black horn
Beside it hanging ; which Sir Gareth
graspt,
And so, before the two could hinder
him,
Sent all his heart and breath thro' all
the horn.
Echo'd the walls ; a light twinkled ;
anon
Came lights and lights, and once
again he blew ;

Whereon were hollow tramlings up
and down
And muffled voices heard, and shad-
ows past ;
Till high above him, circled with her
maids,
The Lady Lyonors at a window stood,
Beautiful among lights, and waving
to him
White hands, and courtesy ; but when
the Prince
Three times had blown—after long
hush—at last—
The huge pavilion slowly yielded up,
Thro' those black foldings, that which
housed therein.
High on a nightblack horse, in night-
black arms,
With white breast-bone, and barren
ribs of Death,
And crown'd with fleshless laughter
—some ten steps—
In the half-light—thro' the dim dawn
—advanced
The monster, and then paused, and
spake no word.

But Gareth spake and all indig-
nantly,
'Fool, for thou hast, men say, the
strength of ten,
Canst thou not trust the limbs thy
God hath given,
But must, to make the terror of thee
more,
Trick thyself out in ghastly imageries
Of that which Life hath done with,
and the clod,
Less dull than thou, will hide with
mantling flowers
As if for pity?' But he spake no word ;
Which set the horror higher : a
maiden swoon'd ;
The Lady Lyonors wrung her hands
and wept,
As doom'd to be the bride of Night
and Death ;
Sir Gareth's head prickled beneath
his helm ;
And ev'n Sir Lancelot thro' his warm
blood felt
Ice strike, and all that mark'd him
were aghast.

At once Sir Lancelot's charger
fiercely neigh'd
And Death's dark war-horse bounded
forward with him.
Then those that did not blink the
terror, saw
That Death was cast to ground, and
slowly rose.
But with one stroke Sir Gareth split
the skull.
Half fell to right and half to left and
lay.
Then with a stronger buffet he clove
the helm.
As throughly as the skull; and out
from this
Issued the bright face of a blooming
boy
Fresh as a flower new-born, and cry-
ing, 'Knight,
Slay me not: my three brethren bad
me do it,
To make a horror all about the house,
And stay the world from Lady Lyon-
ors.
They never dream'd the passes would
be past.'
Answer'd Sir Gareth graciously to
one
Not many a moon his younger, 'My
fair child,
What madness made thee challenge
the chief knight
Of Arthur's hall?' 'Fair Sir, they
bad me do it.
They hate the King, and Lancelot, the
King's friend,
They hoped to slay him somewhere
on the stream,
They never dream'd the passes could
be past.'

Then sprang the happier day from
underground;
And Lady Lyonors and her house,
with dance
And revel and song, made merry over
Death,
As being after all their foolish fears
And horrors only proven a blooming
boy.
So large mirth lived and Gareth won
the quest.

And he that told the tale in older
times
Says that Sir Gareth wedded Lyonors,
But he, that told it later, says Lynette.

THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT.

THE brave Geraint, a knight of
Arthur's court,
A tributary prince of Devon, one
Of that great Order of the Table
Round,
Had married Enid, Yniol's only child,
And loved her, as he loved the light
of Heaven.
And as the light of Heaven varies,
now
At sunrise, now at sunset, now by
night
With moon and trembling stars, so
loved Geraint
To make her beauty vary day by day,
In crimsons and in purples and in
gems.
And Enid, but to please her husband's
eye,
Who first had found and loved her in
a state
Of broken fortunes, daily fronted him
In some fresh splendor; and the
Queen herself,
Grateful to Prince Geraint for service
done,
Loved her, and often with her own
white hands
Array'd and deck'd her, as the loveli-
est,
Next after her own self, in all the
court.
And Enid loved the Queen, and with
true heart
Adored her, as the stateliest and the
best
And loveliest of all women upon
earth.
And seeing them so tender and so
close,
Long in their common love rejoiced
Geraint.
But when a rumor rose about the
Queen,

Touching her guilty love for Lancelot,
Tho' yet there lived no proof, nor yet
 was heard
The world's loud whisper breaking
 into storm,
Not less Geraint believed it; and
 there fell
A horror on him, lest his gentle wife,
Thro' that great tenderness for Guinevere,
Had suffer'd, or should suffer any
 taint
In nature: wherefore going to the
 King,
He made this pretext, that his princedom lay
Close on the borders of a territory,
Wherein were bandit earls, and caitiff
 knights,
Assassins, and all flyers from the hand
Of Justice, and whatever loathes a
 law:
And therefore, till the King himself
 should please
To cleanse this common sewer of all
 his realm,
He craved a fair permission to depart,
And there defend his marches; and
 the King
Mused for a little on his plea, but,
 last,
Allowing it, the Prince and Enid
 rode,
And fifty knights rode with them, to
 the shores
Of Severn, and they past to their own
 land;
Where, thinking, that if ever yet was
 wife
True to her lord, mine shall be so to
 me,
He compass'd her with sweet observances
And worship, never leaving her, and
 grew
Forgetful of his promise to the King,
Forgetful of the falcon and the hunt,
Forgetful of the tilt and tournament,
Forgetful of his glory and his name,
Forgetful of his princedom and its
 cares.
And this forgetfulness was hateful to
 her.

And by and by the people, when they
 met
In twos and threes, or fuller companies,
Began to scoff and jeer and babble of
 him
As of a prince whose manhood was
 all gone,
And molten down in mere uxoriousness.
And this she gather'd from the people's eyes:
This too the women who attired her
 head,
To please her, dwelling on his boundless love,
Told Enid, and they sadden'd her the
 more:
And day by day she thought to tell
 Geraint,
But could not out of bashful delicacy;
While he that watch'd her sadden,
 was the more
Suspicious that her nature had a taint.

At last, it chanced that on a summer
 morn
(They sleeping each by either) the
 new sun
Beat thro' the blindless casement of
 the room,
And heated the strong warrior in his
 dreams;
Who, moving, cast the coverlet aside,
And bared the knotted column of
 his throat,
The massive square of his heroic
 breast,
And arms on which the standing
 muscle sloped,
As slopes a wild brook o'er a little
 stone,
Running too vehemently to break
 upon it.
And Enid woke and sat beside the
 couch,
Admiring him, and thought within
 herself,
Was ever man so grandly made as
 he?
Then, like a shadow, past the people's
 talk
And accusation of uxoriousness

Across her mind, and bowing over
him,
Low to her own heart piteously she
said :

‘O noble breast and all-puissant
arms,
Am I the cause, I the poor cause that
men
Reproach you, saying all your force
is gone?
I *am* the cause, because I dare not
speak
And tell him what I think and what
they say.
And yet I hate that he should linger
here;
I cannot love my lord and not his
name.
Far liefer had I gird his harness on
him,
And ride with him to battle and stand
by,
And watch his mightful hand striking
great blows
At caitiffs and at wrongers of the
world.
Far better were I laid in the dark
earth,
Not hearing any more his noble voice,
Not to be folded more in these dear
arms,
And darken’d from the high light in
his eyes,
Than that my lord thro’ me should
suffer shame.
Am I so bold, and could I so stand
by,
And see my dear lord wounded in the
strife,
Or maybe pierced to death before
mine eyes,
And yet not dare to tell him what I
think,
And how men slur him, saying all his
force
Is melted into mere effeminacy?
O me, I fear that I am no true wife.’

Half inwardly, half audibly she
spoke,
And the strong passion in her made
her weep

True tears upon his broad and naked
breast,
And these awoke him, and by great
mischance
He heard but fragments of her later
words,
And that she fear’d she was not a true
wife.
And then he thought, ‘In spite of all
my care,
For all my pains, poor man, for all my
pains,
She is not faithful to me, and I see
her
Weeping for some gay knight in
Arthur’s hall.’
Then tho’ he loved and revered
her too much
To dream she could be guilty of foul
act,
Right thro’ his manful breast darted
the pang
That makes a man, in the sweet face
of her
Whom he loves most, lonely and
miserable.
At this he hurl’d his huge limbs out of
bed,
And shook his drowsy squire awake
and cried,
‘My charger and her palfrey;’ then
to her,
‘I will ride forth into the wilderness;
For tho’ it seems my spurs are yet to
win,
I have not fall’n so low as some
would wish.
And thou, put on thy worst and
meanest dress
And ride with me.’ And Enid ask’d,
amazed,
‘If Enid errs, let Enid learn her
fault.’
But he, ‘I charge thee, ask not, but
obey.’
Then she bethought her of a faded
silk,
A faded mantle and a faded veil,
And moving toward a cedarn cabinet,
Wherein she kept them folded rever-
ently
With sprigs of summer laid between
the folds,

She took them, and array'd herself
therein,
Remembering when first he came on
her
Drest in that dress, and how he loved
her in it,
And all her foolish fears about the
dress,
And all his journey to her, as himself
Had told her, and their coming to the
court.

For Arthur on the Whitsuntide
before
Held court at old Caerleon upon Usk.
There on a day, he sitting high in hall,
Before him came a forester of Dean,
Wet from the woods, with notice of a
hart
Taller than all his fellows, milky-
white,
First seen that day: these things he
told the King.
Then the good King gave order to
let blow
His horns for hunting on the morrow-
morn.
And when the Queen petition'd for
his leave
To see the hunt, allow'd it easily.
So with the morning all the court
were gone.
But Guinevere lay late into the morn,
Lost in sweet dreams, and dreaming
of her love
For Lancelot, and forgetful of the
hunt;
But rose at last, a single maiden with
her,
Took horse, and forded Usk, and
gain'd the wood;
There, on a little knoll beside it,
stay'd
Waiting to hear the hounds; but
heard instead
A sudden sound of hoofs, for Prince
Geraint,
Late also, wearing neither hunting-
dress
Nor weapon, save a golden-hilted
brand,
Came quickly flashing thro' the shal-
low ford

Behind them, and so gallop'd up the
knoll.
A purple scarf, at either end whereof
There swung an apple of the purest
gold,
Sway'd round about him, as he
gallop'd up
To join them, glancing like a dragon-
fly
In summer suit and silks of holiday.
Low bow'd the tributary Prince, and
she,
Sweetly and stately, and with all
grace
Of womanhood and queenhood,
answer'd him:
'Late, late, Sir Prince,' she said,
'later than we!'
'Yea, noble Queen,' he answer'd,
'and so late
That I but come like you to see the
hunt,
Not join it.' 'Therefore wait with
me,' she said;
'For on this little knoll, if anywhere,
There is good chance that we shall
hear the hounds:
Here often they break covert at our
feet.'

And while they listen'd for the
distant hunt,
And chiefly for the baying of Cavall,
King Arthur's hound of deepest
mouth, there rode
Full slowly by a knight, lady, and
dwarf;
Whereof the dwarf lagg'd latest, and
the knight
Had visor up, and show'd a youthful
face,
Imperious, and of haughtiest linea-
ments.
And Guinevere, not mindful of his face
In the King's hall, desired his name,
and sent
Her maiden to demand it of the
dwarf;
Who being vicious, old and irritable,
And doubling all his master's vice of
pride,
Made answer sharply that she should
not know.

'Then will I ask it of himself,' she said.

'Nay, by my faith, thou shalt not,' cried the dwarf;

'Thou art not worthy ev'n to speak of him;'

And when she put her horse toward the knight,

Struck at her with his whip, and she return'd

Indignant to the Queen; whereat Geraint

Exclaiming, 'Surely I will learn the name,'

Made sharply to the dwarf, and ask'd it of him,

Who answer'd as before; and when the Prince

Had put his horse in motion toward the knight,

Struck at him with his whip, and cut his cheek.

The Prince's blood spirted upon the scarf,

Dyeing it; and his quick, instinctive hand

Caught at the hilt, as to abolish him:

But he, from his exceeding manfulness And pure nobility of temperament,

Wroth to be wroth at such a worm, refrain'd

From ev'n a word, and so returning said:

'I will avenge this insult, noble Queen,

Done in your maiden's person to yourself:

And I will track this vermin to their earths:

For tho' I ride unarm'd, I do not doubt

To find, at some place I shall come at, arms

On loan, or else for pledge; and, being found,

Then will I fight him, and will break his pride,

And on the third day will again be here,

So that I be not fall'n in fight. Farewell.'

'Farewell, fair Prince,' answer'd the stately Queen.

'Be prosperous in this journey, as in all;

And may you light on all things that you love,

And live to wed with her whom first you love:

But ere you wed with any, bring your bride,

And I, were she the daughter of a king,

Yea, tho' she were a beggar from the hedge,

Will clothe her for her bridals like the sun.'

And Prince Geraint, now thinking that he heard

The noble hart at bay, now the far horn,

A little vext at losing of the hunt, A little at the vile occasion, rode,

By ups and downs, thro' many a grassy glade

And valley, with fixt eye following the three.

At last they issued from the world of wood,

And climb'd upon a fair and even ridge,

And show'd themselves against the sky, and sank.

And thither came Geraint, and underneath

Beheld the long street of a little town In a long valley, on one side whereof,

White from the mason's hand, a fortress rose;

And on one side a castle in decay, Beyond a bridge that spann'd a dry

ravine:

And out of town and valley came a noise

As of a broad brook o'er a shingly bed

Brawling, or like a clamor of the rooks

At distance, ere they settle for the night.

And onward to the fortress rode the three,

And enter'd, and were lost behind the walls.

'So,' thought Geraint, 'I have track'd him to his earth.'

And down the long street riding wearily,

Found every hostel full, and everywhere

Was hammer laid to hoof, and the hot hiss

And bustling whistle of the youth who scour'd

His master's armor; and of such a one

He ask'd, 'What means the tumult in the town?'

Who told him, scouring still, 'The sparrow-hawk!'

Then riding close behind an ancient churl,

Who, smitten by the dusty sloping beam,

Went sweating underneath a sack of corn,

Ask'd yet once more what meant the hubbub here?

Who answer'd gruffly, 'Ugh! the sparrow-hawk.'

Then riding further past an armorer's, Who, with back turn'd, and bow'd above his work,

Sat riveting a helmet on his knee, He put the self-same query, but the man

Not turning round, nor looking at him, said:

'Friend, he that labors for the sparrow-hawk

Has little time for idle questioners.' Whereat Geraint flash'd into sudden spleen:

'A thousand pips eat up your sparrow-hawk!

Tits, wrens, and all wing'd nothings peck him dead!

Ye think the rustic cackle of your bourg

The murmur of the world! What is it to me?

O wretched set of sparrows, one and all,

Who pipe of nothing but of sparrow-hawks!

Speak, if ye be not like the rest, hawk-mad,

Where can I get me harborage for the night?

And arms, arms, arms to fight my enemy? Speak!'

Whereat the armorer turning all amazed

And seeing one so gay in purple silks,

Came forward with the helmet yet in hand

And answer'd, 'Pardon me, O stranger knight;

We hold a tourney here to-morrow morn,

And there is scanty time for half the work.

Arms? truth! I know not: all are wanted here.

Harborage? truth, good truth, I know not, save,

It may be, at Earl Yniol's, o'er the bridge

Yonder.' He spoke and fell to work again.

Then rode Geraint, a little spleenful yet,

Across the bridge that spann'd the dry ravine.

There musing sat the hoary-headed Earl,

(His dress a suit of fray'd magnificence,

Once fit for feasts of ceremony) and said:

'Whither, fair son?' to whom Geraint replied,

'O friend, I seek a harborage for the night.'

Then Yniol, 'Enter therefore and partake

The slender entertainment of a house Once rich, now poor, but ever open-door'd.'

'Thanks, venerable friend,' replied Geraint;

'So that ye do not serve me sparrow-hawks

For supper, I will enter, I will eat With all the passion of a twelve hours' fast.'

Then sigh'd and smiled the hoary-headed Earl,
 And answer'd, 'Graver cause than yours is mine
 To curse this hedgerow thief, the sparrow-hawk;
 But in, go in; for save yourself desire it,
 We will not touch upon him ev'n in jest.'

Then rode Geraint into the castle court,
 His charger trampling many a prickly star
 Of sprouted thistle on the broken stones.
 He look'd and saw that all was ruinous.
 Here stood a shatter'd archway plumed with fern;
 And here had fall'n a great part of a tower,
 Whole, like a crag that tumbles from the cliff,
 And like a crag was gay with wilding flowers:
 And high above a piece of turret stair,
 Worn by the feet that now were silent, wound
 Bare to the sun, and monstrous ivy-stems
 Claspt the gray walls with hairy-fibred arms,
 And suck'd the joining of the stones, and look'd
 A knot, beneath, of snakes, aloft, a grove.

And while he waited in the castle court,
 The voice of Enid, Yniol's daughter, rang
 Clear thro' the open casement of the hall,
 Singing; and as the sweet voice of a bird,
 Heard by the lander in a lonely isle,
 Moves him to think what kind of bird it is
 That sings so delicately clear, and make
 Conjecture of the plumage and the form;

So the sweet voice of Enid moved Geraint;
 And made him like a man abroad at morn
 When first the liquid note beloved of men
 Comes flying over many a windy wave
 To Britain, and in April suddenly
 Breaks from a coppice gemm'd with green and red,
 And he suspends his converse with a friend,
 Or it may be the labor of his hands,
 To think or say, 'There is the nightingale;'
 So fared it with Geraint, who thought and said,
 'Here, by God's grace, is the one voice for me.'

It chanced the song that Enid sang was one
 Of Fortune and her wheel, and Enid sang:

'Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel and lower the proud;
 Turn thy wild wheel thro' sunshine, storm, and cloud;
 Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate.

'Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel with smile or frown;
 With that wild wheel we go not up or down;
 Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great.

'Smile and we smile, the lords of many lands;
 Frown and we smile, the lords of our own hands;
 For man is man and master of his fate.

'Turn, turn thy wheel above the staring crowd;
 Thy wheel and thou are shadows in the cloud;
 Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate.'

'Hark, by the bird's song ye may
learn the nest,'
Said Yniol; 'enter quickly.' Enter-
ing then,
Right o'er a mount of newly-fallen
stones,
The dusky-rafter'd many-cobweb'd
hall,
He found an ancient dame in dim bro-
cade;
And near her, like a blossom vermeil-
white,
That lightly breaks a faded flower-
sheath,
Moved the fair Enid, all in faded
silk,
Her daughter. In a moment thought
Geraint,
'Here by God's rood is the one maid
for me.'
But none spake word except the hoary
Earl:
'Enid, the good knight's horse stands
in the court;
Take him to stall, and give him corn,
and then
Go to the town and buy us flesh and
wine;
And we will make us merry as we
may.
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are
great.'

He spake: the Prince, as Enid past
him, fain
To follow, strode a stride, but Yniol
caught
His purple scarf, and held, and said,
'Forbear!
Rest! the good house, tho' ruin'd, O
my son,
Endures not that her guest should
serve himself.'
And reverencing the custom of the
house
Geraint, from utter courtesy, forbore.

So Enid took his charger to the
stall;
And after went her way across the
bridge,
And reach'd the town, and while the
Prince and Earl

Yet spoke together, came again with
one,
A youth, that following with a costrel
bore
The means of goodly welcome, flesh
and wine.
And Enid brought sweet cakes to
make them cheer,
And in her veil enfolded, manchet
bread.
And then, because their hall must
also serve
For kitchen, boil'd the flesh, and
spread the board,
And stood behind, and waited on the
three.
And seeing her so sweet and service-
able,
Geraint had longing in him evermore
To stoop and kiss the tender little
thumb,
That cros't the trencher as she laid it
down:
But after all had eaten, then Geraint,
For now the wine made summer in
his veins,
Let his eye rove in following, or rest
On Enid at her lowly handmaid-work,
Now here, now there, about the
dusky hall;
Then suddenly address the hoary
Earl:

'Fair Host and Earl, I pray your
courtesy;
This sparrow-hawk, what is he? tell
me of him.
His name? but no, good faith, I will
not have it:
For if he be the knight whom late
I saw
Ride into that new fortress by your
town,
White from the mason's hand, then
have I sworn
From his own lips to have it—I am
Geraint
Of Devon—for this morning when the
Queen
Sent her own maiden to demand the
name,
His dwarf, a vicious under-shapen
thing,

Struck at her with his whip, and she
 return'd
 Indignant to the Queen; and then I
 swore
 That I would track this caitiff to his
 hold,
 And fight and break his pride, and
 have it of him.
 And all unarm'd I rode, and thought
 to find
 Arms in your town, where all the men
 are mad;
 They take the rustic murmur of their
 bourg
 For the great wave that echoes round
 the world;
 They would not hear me speak: but
 if ye know
 Where I can light on arms, or if your-
 self
 Should have them, tell me, seeing I
 have sworn
 That I will break his pride and learn
 his name,
 Avenging this great insult done the
 Queen.'

Then cried Earl Yniol, 'Art thou he
 indeed,
 Geraint, a name far-sounded among
 men
 For noble deeds? and truly I, when
 first
 I saw you moving by me on the
 bridge,
 Felt ye were somewhat, yea, and by
 your state
 And presence might have guess'd you
 one of those
 That eat in Arthur's hall at Came-
 lot.
 Nor speak I now from foolish flat-
 tery;
 For this dear child hath often heard
 me praise
 Your feats of arms, and often when I
 paused
 Hath ask'd again, and ever loved to
 hear;
 So grateful is the noise of noble
 deeds
 To noble hearts who see but acts of
 wrong:

O never yet had woman such a pair
 Of suitors as this maiden; first
 Limours,
 A creature wholly given to brawls
 and wine,
 Drunk even when he woo'd; and be
 he dead
 I know not, but he past to the wild
 land.
 The second was your foe, the sparrow-
 hawk,
 My curse, my nephew—I will not let
 his name
 Slip from my lips if I can help it—
 he,
 When I that knew him fierce and
 turbulent
 Refused her to him, then his pride
 awoke;
 And since the proud man often is the
 mean,
 He sow'd a slander in the common
 ear,
 Affirming that his father left him
 gold,
 And in my charge, which was not
 render'd to him;
 Bribed with large promises the men
 who served
 About my person, the more easily
 Because my means were somewhat
 broken into
 Thro' open doors and hospitality;
 Raised my own town against me in
 the night
 Before my Enid's birthday, sack'd
 my house;
 From mine own earldom foully ousted
 me;
 Built that new fort to overawe my
 friends,
 For truly there are those who love me
 yet;
 And keeps me in this ruinous castle
 here,
 Where doubtless he would put me
 soon to death,
 But that his pride too much despises
 me:
 And I myself sometimes despise my-
 self;
 For I have let men be, and have their
 way;

Am much too gentle, have not used
my power :

Nor know I whether I be very base
Or very manful, whether very wise
Or very foolish ; only this I know,
That whatsoever evil happen to me,
I seem to suffer nothing heart or
limb,
But can endure it all most patiently.'

'Well said, true heart,' replied
Geraint, 'but arms,
That if the sparrow-hawk, this
nephew, fight
In next day's tourney I may break his
pride.'

And Yniol answer'd, 'Arms, in-
deed, but old
And rusty, old and rusty, Prince
Geraint,
Are mine, and therefore at thine ask-
ing, thine.
But in this tournament can no man
tilt,
Except the lady he loves best be
there.
Two forks are fixt into the meadow
ground,
And over these is placed a silver
wand,
And over that a golden sparrow-hawk,
The prize of beauty for the fairest
there.
And this, what knight soever be in
field
Lays claim to for the lady at his side,
And tilts with my good nephew
thereupon,
Who being apt at arms and big of
bone
Has ever won it for the lady with
him,
And toppling over all antagonism
Has earn'd himself the name of spar-
row-hawk.
But thou, that hast no lady, canst not
fight.'

To whom Geraint with eyes all
bright, replied,
Leaning a little toward him, 'Thy
leave !

Let *me* lay lance in rest, O noble
host,
For this dear child, because I never
saw,
Tho' having seen all beauties of our
time,
Nor can see elsewhere, anything so
fair.
And if I fall her name will yet re-
main
Untarnish'd as before ; but if I live,
So aid me Heaven when at mine
uttermost,
As I will make her truly my true
wife.'

Then, howsoever patient, Yniol's
heart
Danced in his bosom, seeing better
days.
And looking round he saw not Enid
there,
(Who hearing her own name had
stol'n away)
But that old dame, to whom full ten-
derly
And fondling all her hand in his
he said,
'Mother, a maiden is a tender thing,
And best by her that bore her under-
stood.
Go thou to rest, but ere thou go to
rest
Tell her, and prove her heart toward
the Prince.'

So spake the kindly-hearted Earl,
and she
With frequent smile and nod depart-
ing found,
Half disarray'd as to her rest, the
girl ;
Whom first she kiss'd on either cheek,
and then
On either shining shoulder laid a hand,
And kept her off and gazed upon her
face,
And told her all their converse in the
hall,
Proving her heart : but never light and
shade
Cours'd one another more on open
ground

Beneath a troubled heaven, than red
 and pale
 Across the face of Enid hearing her;
 While slowly falling as a scale that
 falls,
 When weight is added only grain by
 grain,
 Sank her sweet head upon her gentle
 breast;
 Nor did she lift an eye nor speak a
 word,
 Rapt in the fear and in the wonder of
 it;
 So moving without answer to her
 rest
 She found no rest, and ever fail'd to
 draw
 The quiet night into her blood, but lay
 Contemplating her own unworthiness;
 And when the pale and bloodless east
 began
 To quicken to the sun, arose, and
 raised
 Her mother too, and hand in hand
 they moved
 Down to the meadow where the jousts
 were held,
 And waited there for Yniol and
 Geraint.

And thither came the twain, and
 when Geraint
 Beheld her first in field, awaiting him,
 He felt, were she the prize of bodily
 force,
 Himself beyond the rest pushing could
 move
 The chair of Idris. Yniol's rusted
 arms
 Were on his princely person, but thro'
 these
 Princelike his bearing shone; and
 errant knights
 And ladies came, and by and by the
 town
 Flow'd in, and settling circled all the
 lists.
 And there they fixt the forks into the
 ground,
 And over these they placed the silver
 wand,
 And over that the golden sparrow-
 hawk.

Then Yniol's nephew, after trumpet
 blown,
 Spake to the lady with him and pro-
 claim'd,
 'Advance and take, as fairest of the
 fair,
 What I these two years past have won
 for thee,
 The prize of beauty.' Loudly spake
 the Prince,
 'Forbear: there is a worthier,' and the
 knight
 With some surprise and thrice as
 much disdain
 Turn'd, and beheld the four, and all
 his face
 Glow'd like the heart of a great fire at
 Yule,
 So burnt he was with passion, crying
 out,
 'Do battle for it then,' no more; and
 thrice
 They clash'd together, and thrice they
 brake their spears.
 Then each, dishorsed and drawing,
 lash'd at each
 So often and with such blows, that all
 the crowd
 Wonder'd, and now and then from dis-
 tant walls
 There came a clapping as of phantom
 hands.
 So twice they fought, and twice they
 breathed, and still
 The dew of their great labor, and the
 blood
 Of their strong bodies, flowing, drain'd
 their force.
 But either's force was match'd till
 Yniol's cry,
 'Remember that great insult done the
 Queen,'
 Increased Geraint's, who heaved his
 blade aloft,
 And crack'd the helmet thro', and bit
 the bone,
 And fell'd him, and set foot upon his
 breast,
 And said, 'Thy name?' To whom
 the fallen man
 Made answer, groaning, 'Edyrn, son
 of Nudd!
 Ashamed am I that I should tell it thee.



"WE TWO MUST PART." — *Page 76.*

My pride is broken: men have seen
 my fall.'
 'Then, Edyrn, son of Nudd,' replied
 Geraint,
 'These two things shalt thou do, or
 else thou diest.
 First, thou thyself, with damsel and
 with dwarf,
 Shalt ride to Arthur's court, and coming there,
 Crave pardon for that insult done the
 Queen,
 And shalt abide her judgment on it;
 next,
 Thou shalt give back their earldom to
 thy kin.
 These two things shalt thou do, or thou
 shalt die.'
 And Edyrn answer'd, 'These things
 will I do,
 For I have never yet been overthrown,
 And thou hast overthrown me, and my
 pride
 Is broken down, for Enid sees my
 fall!'
 And rising up, he rode to Arthur's
 court,
 And there the Queen forgave him
 easily.
 And being young, he changed and
 came to loathe
 His crime of traitor, slowly drew him-
 self
 Bright from his old dark life, and fell
 at last
 In the great battle fighting for the
 King.

But when the third day from the
 hunting-morn
 Made a low splendor in the world, and
 wings
 Moved in her ivy, Enid, for she lay
 With her fair head in the dim-yellow
 light,
 Among the dancing shadows of the
 birds,
 Woke and bethought her of her promise
 given
 No later than last eve to Prince
 Geraint—
 So bent he seem'd on going the third
 day,

He would not leave her, till her promise
 given—
 To ride with him this morning to the
 court,
 And there be made known to the
 stately Queen,
 And there be wedded with all ceremony.
 At this she cast her eyes upon her
 dress,
 And thought it never yet had look'd so
 mean.
 For as a leaf in mid-November is
 To what it was in mid-October, seem'd
 The dress that now she look'd on to
 the dress
 She look'd on ere the coming of
 Geraint.
 And still she look'd, and still the terror
 grew
 Of that strange bright and dreadful
 thing, a court,
 All staring at her in her faded silk:
 And softly to her own sweet heart she
 said:

'This noble prince who won our
 earldom back,
 So splendid in his acts and his attire,
 Sweet heaven, how much I shall discredit
 him!
 Would he could tarry with us here
 awhile,
 But being so beholden to the Prince,
 It were but little grace in any of us,
 Bent as he seem'd on going this third
 day,
 To seek a second favor at his hands.
 Yet if he could but tarry a day or
 two,
 Myself would work eye dim, and finger
 lame,
 Far liefer than so much discredit him.'

And Enid fell in longing for a dress
 All branch'd and flower'd with gold, a
 costly gift
 Of her good mother, given her on the
 night
 Before her birthday, three sad years
 ago,
 That night of fire, when Edyrn sack'd
 their house,

And scatter'd all they had to all the
 winds :
 For while the mother show'd it, and
 the two
 Were turning and admiring it, the
 work
 To both appear'd so costly, rose a cry
 That Edyrn's men were on them, and
 they fled
 With little save the jewels they had
 on,
 Which being sold and sold had bought
 them bread :
 And Edyrn's men had caught them in
 their flight,
 And placed them in this ruin; and
 she wish'd
 The Prince had found her in her
 ancient home;
 Then let her fancy flit across the past,
 And roam the goodly places that she
 knew;
 And last bethought her how she used
 to watch,
 Near that old home, a pool of golden
 carp;
 And one was patch'd and blurr'd and
 lustreless
 Among his burnish'd brethren of the
 pool;
 And half asleep she made comparison
 Of that and these to her own faded
 self
 And the gay court, and fell asleep
 again;
 And dreamt herself was such a faded
 form
 Among her burnish'd sisters of the
 pool;
 But this was in the garden of a king;
 And tho' she lay dark in the pool, she
 knew
 That all was bright; that all about
 were birds
 Of sunny plume in gilded trellis-work;
 That all the turf was rich in plots that
 look'd
 Each like a garnet or a turkis in it;
 And lords and ladies of the high
 court went
 In silver tissue talking things of state;
 And children of the King in cloth of
 gold

Glanced at the doors or gambol'd
 down the walks;
 And while she thought 'They will not
 see me,' came
 A stately queen whose name was
 Guinevere,
 And all the children in their cloth of
 gold
 Ran to her, crying, 'If we have fish at
 all
 Let them be gold; and charge the
 gardeners now
 To pick the faded creature from the
 pool,
 And cast it on the mixen that it
 die.'
 And therewithal one came and seized
 on her,
 And Enid started waking, with her
 heart
 All overshadow'd by the foolish
 dream,
 And lo! it was her mother grasping
 her
 To get her well awake; and in her
 hand
 A suit of bright apparel, which she
 laid
 Flat on the couch, and spoke exult-
 ingly:

'See here, my child, how fresh the
 colors look,
 How fast they hold like colors of a
 shell
 That keeps the wear and polish of the
 wave.
 Why not? It never yet was worn, I
 trow:
 Look on it, child, and tell me if ye
 know it.'

And Enid look'd, but all confused
 at first,
 Could scarce divide it from her foolish
 dream:
 Then suddenly she knew it and
 rejoiced,
 And answer'd, 'Yea, I know it; your
 good gift,
 So sadly lost on that unhappy night;
 Your own good gift!' 'Yea, surely,'
 said the dame,

' And gladly given again this happy
morn.
For when the jousts were ended
yesterday,
Went Yniol thro' the town, and every-
where
He found the sack and plunder of our
house
All scatter'd thro' the houses of the
town ;
And gave command that all which
once was ours
Should now be ours again : and yester-
eve,
While ye were talking sweetly with
your Prince,
Came one with this and laid it in my
hand,
For love or fear, or seeking favor of
us,
Because we have our earldom back
again.
And yester-eve I would not tell you of
it,
But kept it for a sweet surprise at
morn.
Yea, truly is it not a sweet surprise ?
For I myself unwillingly have worn
My faded suit, as you, my child, have
yours,
And howsoever patient, Yniol his.
Ah, dear, he took me from a goodly
house,
With store of rich apparel, sumptuous
fare,
And page, and maid, and squire, and
seneschal,
And pastime both of hawk and hound,
and all
That appertains to noble mainte-
nance.
Yea, and he brought me to a goodly
house ;
But since our fortune swerved from
sun to shade,
And all thro' that young traitor, cruel
need
Constrain'd us, but a better time has
come ;
So clothe yourself in this, that better
fits
Our mended fortunes and a Prince's
bride :

For tho' ye won the prize of fairest
fair,
And tho' I heard him call you fairest
fair,
Let never maiden think, however
fair,
She is not fairer in new clothes than
old.
And should some great court-lady say,
the Prince
Hath pick'd a ragged-robin from the
hedge,
And like a madman brought her to the
court,
Then were ye shamed, and, worse,
might shame the Prince
To whom we are beholden ; but I
know,
When my dear child is set forth at her
best,
That neither court nor country, tho'
they sought
Thro' all the provinces like those of
old
That lighted on Queen Esther, has
her match.'

Here ceased the kindly mother out
of breath ;
And Enid listen'd brightening as she
lay ;
Then, as the white and glittering star
of morn
Parts from a bank of snow, and by
and by
Slips into golden cloud, the maiden
rose,
And left her maiden couch, and robed
herself,
Help'd by the mother's careful hand
and eye,
Without a mirror, in the gorgeous
gown ;
Who, after, turn'd her daughter
round, and said,
She never yet had seen her half so
fair ;
And call'd her like that maiden in the
tale,
Whom Gwydion made by glamor out
of flowers,
And sweeter than the bride of Cassive-
laun,

Flur, for whose love the Roman
 Cæsar first
 Invaded Britain, 'But we beat him
 back,
 As this great Prince invaded us, and
 we,
 Not beat him back, but welcomed him
 with joy.
 And I can scarcely ride with you to
 court,
 For old am I, and rough the ways and
 wild;
 But Yniol goes, and I full oft shall
 dream
 I see my princess as I see her now,
 Clothed with my gift, and gay among
 the gay.'

But while the women thus rejoiced,
 Geraint
 Woke where he slept in the high hall,
 and call'd
 For Enid, and when Yniol made
 report
 Of that good mother making Enid gay
 In such apparel as might well beseem
 His princess, or indeed the stately
 Queen,
 He answer'd: 'Earl, entreat her by
 my love,
 Albeit I give no reason but my wish,
 That she ride with me in her faded
 silk.'
 Yniol with that hard message went;
 it fell
 Like flaws in summer laying lusty
 corn:
 For Enid, all abash'd she knew not
 why,
 Dared not to glance at her good
 mother's face,
 But silently, in all obedience,
 Her mother silent too, nor helping her,
 Laid from her limbs the costly-
 broider'd gift,
 And robed them in her ancient suit
 again,
 And so descended. Never man re-
 joiced
 More than Geraint to greet her thus
 attired;
 And glancing all at once as keenly at
 her

As careful robins eye the delver's
 toil,
 Made her cheek burn and either eye-
 lid fall,
 But rested with her sweet face satis-
 fied;
 Then seeing cloud upon the mother's
 brow,
 Her by both hands he caught, and
 sweetly said,

'O my new mother, be not wroth
 or grieved
 At thy new son, for my petition to
 her.
 When late I left Caerleon, our great
 Queen,
 In words whose echo lasts, they were
 so sweet,
 Made promise, that whatever bride I
 brought,
 Herself would clothe her like the sun
 in Heaven.
 Thereafter, when I reach'd this ruin'd
 hall,
 Beholding one so bright in dark
 estate,
 I vow'd that could I gain her, our fair
 Queen,
 No hand but hers, should make your
 Enid burst
 Sunlike from cloud—and likewise
 thought perhaps,
 That service done so graciously would
 bind
 The two together; fain I would the
 two
 Should love each other: how can
 Enid find
 A nobler friend? Another thought
 was mine;
 I came among you here so suddenly,
 That tho' her gentle presence at the
 lists
 Might well have served for proof that
 I was loved,
 I doubted whether daughter's tender-
 ness,
 Or easy nature, might not let itself
 Be moulded by your wishes for her
 weal;
 Or whether some false sense in her
 own self

Of my contrasting brightness, over-
bore
Her fancy dwelling in this dusky hall;
And such a sense might make her
long for court
And all its perilous glories: and I
thought,
That could I somehow prove such
force in her
Link'd with such love for me, that at
a word
(No reason given her) she could cast
aside
A splendor dear to women, new to
her,
And therefore dearer; or if not so
new,
Yet therefore tenfold dearer by the
power
Of intermitted usage; then I felt
That I could rest, a rock in ebbs and
flows,
Fixt on her faith. Now, therefore, I
do rest,
A prophet certain of my prophecy,
That never shadow of mistrust can
cross
Between us. Grant me pardon for
my thoughts:
And for my strange petition I will
make
Amends hereafter by some gaudy-day,
When your fair child shall wear your
costly gift
Beside your own warm hearth, with,
on her knees,
Who knows? another gift of the high
God,
Which, maybe, shall have learn'd to
lisp you thanks.'

He spoke: the mother smiled, but
half in tears,
Then brought a mantle down and
wrapt her in it,
And claspt and kiss'd her, and they
rode away.

Now thrice that morning Guinevere
had climb'd
The giant tower, from whose high
crest, they say,
Men saw the goodly hills of Somerset,

And white sails flying on the yellow sea;
But not to goodly hill or yellow sea
Look'd the fair Queen, but up the
vale of Usk,
By the flat meadow, till she saw them
come;
And then descending met them at the
gates,
Embraced her with all welcome as a
friend,
And did her honor as the Prince's
bride,
And clothed her for her bridals like
the sun;
And all that week was old Caerleon
gay,
For by the hands of Dubric, the high
saint,
They twain were wedded with all
ceremony.

And this was on the last year's
Whitsuntide.
But Enid ever kept the faded silk,
Remembering how first he came on
her,
Drest in that dress, and how he loved
her in it,
And all her foolish fears about the
nress,
And all his journey toward her, as
himself
Had told her, and their coming to the
court.

And now this morning when he said
to her,
'Put on your worst and meanest
dress,' she found
And took it, and array'd herself there-
in.

GERAINT AND ENID.

O PURBLIND race of miserable men,
How many among us at this very
hour
Do forge a life-long trouble for our-
selves,
By taking true for false, or false for
true;

Here, thro' the feeble twilight of this
world
Groping, how many, until we pass and
reach
That other, where we see as we are
seen!

So fared it with Geraint, who issu-
ing forth
That morning, when they both had
got to horse,
Perhaps because he loved her passion-
ately,
And felt that tempest brooding round
his heart,
Which, if he spoke at all, would
break perforce
Upon a head so dear in thunder, said:
'Not at my side. I charge thee ride
before,
Ever a good way on before; and this
I charge thee, on thy duty as a wife,
Whatever happens, not to speak to
me,
No, not a word!' and Enid was
aghast;
And forth they rode, but scarce three
paces on,
When crying out, 'Effeminate as I am,
I will not fight my way with gilded
arms,
All shall be iron;' he loosed a mighty
purse,
Hung at his belt, and hurl'd it toward
the squire.
So the last sight that Enid had of
home
Was all the marble threshold flashing,
strown
With gold and scatter'd coinage, and
the squire
Chafing his shoulder: then he cried
again,
'To the wilds!' and Enid leading
down the tracks
Thro' which he bad her lead him on,
they past
The marches, and by bandit-haunted
holds,
Gray swamps and pools, waste places
of the hern,
And wildernesses, perilous paths, they
rode:

Round was their pace at first, but
slacken'd soon:
A stranger meeting them had surely
thought
They rode so slowly and they look'd
so pale,
That each had suffer'd some exceed-
ing wrong.
For he was ever saying to himself,
'O I that wasted time to tend upon
her,
To compass her with sweet observ-
ances,
To dress her beautifully and keep her
true'—
And there he broke the sentence in
his heart
Abruptly, as a man upon his tongue
May break it, when his passion
masters him.
And she was ever praying the sweet
heavens
To save her dear lord whole from any
wound.
And ever in her mind she cast about
For that unnoticed failing in herself,
Which made him look so cloudy and
so cold;
Till the great plover's human whistle
amazed
Her heart, and glancing round the
waste she fear'd
In every wavering brake an ambus-
cade.
Then thought again, 'If there be such
in me,
I might amend it by the grace of
Heaven,
If he would only speak and tell me
of it.'

But when the fourth part of the
day was gone,
Then Enid was aware of three tall
knights
On horseback, wholly arm'd, behind a
rock
In shadow, waiting for them, caitiffs
all;
And heard one crying to his fellows,
'Look,
Here comes a laggard hanging down
his head,

Who seems no bolder than a beaten
hound ;
Come, we will slay him and will have
his horse
And armor, and his damsel shall be
ours.'

Then Enid ponder'd in her heart,
and said :
' I will go back a little to my lord,
And I will tell him all their caitiff
talk ;
For, be he wroth even to slaying me,
Far liefer by his dear hand had I
die,
Than that my lord should suffer loss
or shame.'

Then she went back some paces of
return,
Met his full frown timidly firm, and
said ;
' My lord, I saw three bandits by the
rock
Waiting to fall on you, and heard
them boast
That they would slay you, and possess
your horse
And armor, and your damsel should
be theirs.'

He made a wrathful answer : ' Did
I wish
Your warning or your silence? one
command
I laid upon you, not to speak to me,
And thus ye keep it! Well then,
look—for now,
Whether ye wish me victory or de-
feat,
Long for my life, or hunger for my
death,
Yourself shall see my vigor is not
lost.'

Then Enid waited pale and sorrow-
ful,
And down upon him bare the bandit
three.
And at the midmost charging, Prince
Geraint
Drave the long spear a cubit thro'
his breast

And out beyond ; and then against his
brace
Of comrades, each of whom had
broken on him
A lance that splinter'd like an icicle,
Swung from his brand a windy buffet
out
Once, twice, to right, to left, and
stunn'd the twain
Or slew them, and dismounting like
a man
That skins the wild beast after slay-
ing him,
Stript from the three dead wolves of
woman born
The three gay suits of armor which
they wore,
And let the bodies lie, but bound
the suits
Of armor on their horses, each on each,
And tied the bridle-reins of all the
three
Together, and said to her, ' drive them
on
Before you ;' and she drove them
thro' the waste.

He follow'd nearer : ruth began to
work
Against his anger in him, while he
watch'd
The being he loved best in all the
world,
With difficulty in mild obedience
Driving them on : he fain had spoken
to her,
And loosed in words of sudden fire
the wrath
And smoulder'd wrong that burnt him
all within ;
But evermore it seem'd an easier
thing
At once without remorse to strike
her dead,
Than to cry ' Halt,' and to her own
bright face
Accuse her of the least immodesty :
And thus tongue-tied, it made him
wroth the more
That she *could* speak whom his own
ear had heard
Call herself false : and suffering thus
he made

Minutes an age : but in scarce longer
 time
 Than at Caerleon the full-tided Usk,
 Before he turn to fall seaward again,
 Pauses, did Enid, keeping watch,
 behold
 In the first shallow shade of a deep
 wood,
 Before a gloom of stubborn-shafted
 oaks,
 Three other horsemen waiting, wholly
 arm'd,
 Whereof one seem'd far larger than
 her lord,
 And shook her pulses, crying, ' Look,
 a prize !
 Three horses and three goodly suits
 of arms,
 And all in charge of whom ? a girl :
 set on.'
 ' Nay,' said the second, ' yonder comes
 a knight.'
 The third, ' A craven ; how he hangs
 his head.'
 The giant answer'd merrily, ' Yea,
 but one ?
 Wait here, and when he passes fall
 upon him.'

And Enid ponder'd in her heart and
 said,
 ' I will abide the coming of my lord,
 And I will tell him all their villainy.
 My lord is weary with the fight before,
 And they will fall upon him una-
 wares.
 I needs must disobey him for his
 good ;
 How should I dare obey him to his
 harm ?
 Needs must I speak, and tho' he kill
 me for it,
 I save a life dearer to me than mine.'

And she abode his coming, and
 said to him
 With timid firmness, ' Have I leave
 to speak ?'
 He said, ' Ye take it, speaking,' and
 she spoke.

' There lurk three villains yonder in
 the wood,

And each of them is wholly arm'd,
 and one
 Is larger-limb'd than you are, and
 they say
 That they will fall upon you while
 ye pass.'

To which he flung a wrathful
 answer back :
 ' And if there were an hundred in the
 wood,
 And every man were larger-limb'd
 than I,
 And all at once should sally out upon
 me,
 I swear it would not ruffle me so
 much
 As you that not obey me. Stand
 aside,
 And if I fall, cleave to the better
 man.'

And Enid stood aside to wait the
 event,
 Not dare to watch the combat, only
 breathe
 Short fits of prayer, at every stroke a
 breath.
 And he, she dreaded most, bare down
 upon him.
 Aim'd at the helm, his lance err'd ;
 but Geraint's,
 A little in the late encounter strain'd,
 Struck thro' the bulky bandit's corse-
 let home,
 And then brake short, and down his
 enemy roll'd,
 And there lay still ; as he that tells
 the tale
 Saw once a great piece of a promon-
 tory,
 That had a sapling growing on it,
 slide
 From the long shore-cliff's windy walls
 to the beach,
 And there lie still, and yet the sap-
 ling grew :
 So lay the man transfixt. His craven
 pair
 Of comrades making slower at the
 Prince,
 When now they saw their bulwark
 fallen, stood ;

On whom the victor, to confound them
more,
Spurr'd with his terrible war-cry; for
as one,
That listens near a torrent mountain-
brook,
All thro' the crash of the near cata-
ract hears
The drumming thunder of the huger fall
At distance, were the soldiers wont to
hear
His voice in battle, and be kindled by it,
And foemen scared, like that false
pair who turn'd
Flying, but, overtaken, died the death
Themselves had wrought on many an
innocent.

Thereon Geraint, dismounting,
pick'd the lance
That pleased him best, and drew from
those dead wolves
Their three gay suits of armor, each
from each,
And bound them on their horses, each
on each,
And tied the bridle-reins of all the
three
Together, and said to her, 'Drive
them on
Before you,' and she drove them thro'
the wood.

He follow'd nearer still: the pain
she had
To keep them in the wild ways of the
wood,
Two sets of three laden with jingling
arms,
Together, served a little to disedge
The sharpness of that pain about her
heart:
And they themselves, like creatures
gently born
But into bad hands fall'n, and now so
long
By bandits groom'd, prick'd their light
ears, and felt
Her low firm voice and tender govern-
ment.

So thro' the green gloom of the
wood they past,

And issuing under open heavens
beheld
A little town with towers, upon a rock,
And close beneath, a meadow gemlike
chased
In the brown wild, and mowers mow-
ing in it:
And down a rocky pathway from the
place
There came a fair-hair'd youth, that
in his hand
Bare victual for the mowers: and Ger-
aint
Had ruth again on Enid looking pale:
Then, moving downward to the
meadow ground,
He, when the fair-hair'd youth came
by him, said,
'Friend, let her eat; the damsel is so
faint.'
'Yea, willingly,' replied the youth;
'and thou,
My lord, eat also, tho' the fare is
coarse,
And only meet for mowers;' then set
down
His basket, and dismounting on the
sward
They let the horses graze, and ate
themselves.
And Enid took a little delicately,
Less having stomach for it than desire
To close with her lord's pleasure;
but Geraint
Ate all the mowers' victual unawares,
And when he found all empty, was
amazed;
And 'Boy,' said he, 'I have eaten all,
but take
A horse and arms for guerdon; choose
the best.'
He, reddening in extremity of
delight,
'My lord, you overpay me fifty-fold.'
'Ye will be all the wealthier,' cried
the Prince.
'I take it as free gift, then,' said the
boy,
'Not guerdon; for myself can easily,
While your good damsel rests, return,
and fetch
Fresh victual for these mowers of our
Earl;

For these are his, and all the field is
his,
And I myself am his; and I will tell
him
How great a man thou art: he loves
to know
When men of mark are in his terri-
tory:
And he will have thee to his palace
here,
And serve thee costlier than with
mowers' fare.'

Then said Geraint, 'I wish no bet-
ter fare:
I never ate with angrier appetite
Than when I left your mowers dinner-
less.

And into no Earl's palace will I go.
I know, God knows, too much of
palaces!

And if he want me, let him come to me.
But hire us some fair chamber for the
night,

And stalling for the horses, and
return

With victual for these men, and let
us know.'

'Yea, my kind lord,' said the glad
youth, and went,
Held his head high, and thought him-
self a knight,
And up the rocky pathway disappear'd,
Leading the horse, and they were left
alone.

But when the Prince had brought
his errant eyes
Home from the rock, sideways he let
them glance
At Enid, where she droopt: his own
false doom,
That shadow of mistrust should never
cross
Betwixt them, came upon him, and he
sigh'd;
Then with another humorous ruth re-
mark'd
The lusty mowers laboring dinnerless,
And watch'd the sun blaze on the
turning scythe,
And after nodded sleepily in the heat.

But she, remembering her old ruin'd
hall,

And all the windy clamor of the daws
About her hollow turret, pluck'd the
grass

There growing longest by the meadow's
edge,

And into many a listless annulet,
Now over, now beneath her marriage
ring,

Wove and unwove it, till the boy
return'd

And told them of a chamber, and
they went;

Where, after saying to her, 'If ye will,
Call for the woman of the house,' to
which

She answer'd, 'Thanks, my lord;'
the two remain'd

Apart by all the chamber's width, and
mute

As creatures voiceless thro' the fault
of birth,

Or two wild men supporters of a
shield,

Painted, who stare at open space, nor
glance

The one at other, parted by the shield.

On a sudden, many a voice along
the street,

And heel against the pavement echo-
ing, burst

Their drowse; and either started
while the door,

Push'd from without, drave backward
to the wall,

And midmost of a rout of roisterers,
Femininely fair and dissolutely pale,
Her suitor in old years before Geraint,
Enter'd, the wild lord of the place,
Limours.

He moving up with pliant courtliness,
Greeted Geraint full face, but stealth-
ily,

In the mid-warmth of welcome and
graspt hand,

Found Enid with the corner of his eye,
And knew her sitting sad and solitary.

Then cried Geraint for wine and
goodly cheer

To feed the sudden guest, and sump-
tuously

According to his fashion, bad the host
Call in what men soever were his
friends,
And feast with these in honor of their
Earl;
'And care not for the cost; the cost is
mine.'

And wine and food were brought,
and Earl Limours
Drank till he jested with all ease, and
told
Free tales, and took the word and
play'd upon it,
And made it of two colors; for his
talk,
When wine and free companions
kindled him,
Was wont to glance and sparkle like
a gem
Of fifty facets; thus he moved the
Prince
To laughter and his comrades to
applause.
Then, when the Prince was merry,
ask'd Limours,
'Your leave, my lord, to cross the
room, and speak
To your good damsel there who sits
apart,
And seems so lonely?' 'My free
leave,' he said;
'Get her to speak: she doth not speak
to me.'
Then rose Limours, and looking at
his feet,
Like him who tries the bridge he
fears may fail,
Crost and came near, lifted adoring
eyes,
Bow'd at her side and utter'd whisper-
ingly:

'Enid, the pilot star of my lone life,
Enid, my early and my only love,
Enid, the loss of whom hath turn'd
me wild—
What chance is this? how is it I see
you here?
Ye are in my power at last, are in my
power.
Yet fear me not: I call mine own
self wild,

But keep a touch of sweet civility
Here in the heart of waste and wilder-
ness.
I thought, but that your father came
between,
In former days you saw me favorably.
And if it were so do not keep it
back:
Make me a little happier: let me
know it:
Owe you me nothing for a life half-
lost?
Yea, yea, the whole dear debt of all
you are.
And, Enid, you and he, I see with
joy,
Ye sit apart, you do not speak to him,
You come with no attendance, page
or maid,
To serve you—doth he love you as of
old?
For, call it lovers' quarrels, yet I
know
Tho' men may bicker with the things
they love,
They would not make them laughable
in all eyes,
Not while they loved them; and
your wretched dress,
A wretched insult on you, dumbly
speaks
Your story, that this man loves you
no more.
Your beauty is no beauty to him now:
A common chance—right well I know
it—pall'd—
For I know men: nor will ye win
him back,
For the man's love once gone never
returns.
But here is one who loves you as of old;
With more exceeding passion than of
old:
Good, speak the word: my followers
ring him round:
He sits unarm'd; I hold a finger up;
They understand: nay; I do not
mean blood:
Nor need ye look so scared at what I
say:
My malice is no deeper than a moat,
No stronger than a wall: there is the
keep;

He shall not cross us more; speak
 but the word:
 Or speak it not; but then by Him that
 made me
 The one true lover whom you ever
 own'd,
 I will make use of all the power I
 have.
 O pardon me! the madness of that
 hour,
 When first I parted from thee, moves
 me yet.'

At this the tender sound of his own
 voice
 And sweet self-pity, or the fancy of it,
 Made his eye moist; but Enid fear'd
 his eyes,
 Moist as they were, wine-heated from
 the feast;
 And answer'd with such craft as
 women use,
 Guilty or guiltless, to stave off a
 chance
 That breaks upon them perilously,
 and said:

'Earl, if you love me as in former
 years,
 And do not practise on me, come
 with morn,
 And snatch me from him as by vio-
 lence;
 Leave me to-night: I am weary to
 the death.'

Low at leave-taking, with his brand-
 ish'd plume
 Brushing his instep, bow'd the all-
 amorous Earl,
 And the stout Prince bad him a loud
 good-night.
 He moving homeward babbled to his
 men,
 How Enid never loved a man but
 him,
 Nor cared a broken egg-shell for her
 lord.

But Enid left alone with Prince Ger-
 aint,
 Debating his command of silence
 given,

And that she now perforce must vio-
 late it,
 Held commune with herself, and
 while she held
 He fell asleep, and Enid had no
 heart
 To wake him, but hung o'er him,
 wholly pleased
 To find him yet unwounded after
 fight,
 And hear him breathing low and
 equally.
 Anon she rose, and stepping lightly,
 heap'd
 The pieces of his armor in one place,
 All to be there against a sudden
 need;
 Then dozed awhile herself, but over-
 toil'd
 By that day's grief and travel, ever-
 more
 Seem'd catching at a rootless thorn,
 and then
 Went slipping down horrible preci-
 pices,
 And strongly striking out her limbs
 awoke;
 Then thought she heard the wild Earl
 at the door,
 With all his rout of random followers,
 Sound on a dreadful trumpet, sum-
 moning her;
 Which was the red cock shouting to
 the light,
 As the gray dawn stole o'er the dewy
 world,
 And glimmer'd on his armor in the
 room.
 And once again she rose to look at
 it,
 But touch'd it unawares: jangling,
 the casque
 Fell, and he started up and stared at
 her.
 Then breaking his command of silence
 given,
 She told him all that Earl Limours
 had said,
 Except the passage that he loved her
 not;
 Nor left untold the craft herself had
 used;
 But ended with apology so sweet,

Low-spoken, and of so few words,
and seem'd

So justified by that necessity,
That tho' he thought 'was it for
him she wept

In Devon?' he but gave a wrathful
groan,

Saying, 'Your sweet faces make good
fellows fools

And traitors. Call the host and bid
him bring

Charger and palfrey.' So she glided
out

Among the heavy breathings of the
house,

And like a household Spirit at the
walls

Beat, till she woke the sleepers, and
return'd:

Then tending her rough lord, tho' all
unask'd,

In silence, did him service as a
squire;

Till issuing arm'd he found the host
and cried,

'Thy reckoning, friend?' and ere he
learnt it, 'Take

Five horses and their armors;' and
the host

Suddenly honest, answer'd in amaze,
'My lord, I scarce have spent the

worth of one!'

'Ye will be all the wealthier,' said the
Prince,

And then to Enid, 'Forward! and
to-day

I charge you, Enid, more especially,
What thing soever ye may hear, or

see,

Or fancy (tho' I count it of small use
To charge you) that ye speak not but
obey.'

And Enid answer'd, 'Yea, my lord,
I know

Your wish, and would obey; but rid-
ing first,

I hear the violent threats you do not
hear,

I see the danger which you cannot
see:

Then not to give you warning, that
seems hard;

Almost beyond me: yet I would
obey.'

'Yea so,' said he, 'do it: be not too
wise;

Seeing that ye are wedded to a man,
Not all mismated with a yawning

clown,

But one with arms to guard his head
and yours,

With eyes to find you out however
far,

And ears to hear you even in his
dreams.'

With that he turn'd and look'd as
keenly at her

As careful robins eye the delver's toil;
And that within her, which a wanton

fool,

Or hasty judger would have call'd her
guilt,

Made her cheek burn and either eye-
lid fall.

And Geraint look'd and was not satis-
fied.

Then forward by a way which,
beaten broad,

Led from the territory of false
Limours

To the waste earldom of another earl,
Doorm, whom his shaking vassals

call'd the Bull,

Went Enid with her sullen follower
on.

Once she look'd back, and when she
saw him ride

More near by many a rood than yes-
ter-morn,

It wellnigh made her cheerful; till
Geraint

Waving an angry hand as who should
say

'Ye watch me,' sadden'd all her heart
again.

But while the sun yet beat a dewy
blade

The sound of many a heavily-galloping
hoof

Smote on her ear, and turning round
she saw

Dust, and the points of lances bicker
in it.

Then not to disobey her lord's behest,
 And yet to give him warning, for he
 rode
 As if he heard not, moving back she
 held
 Her finger up, and pointed to the
 dust.
 At which the warrior in his obstinacy,
 Because she kept the letter of his
 word,
 Was in a manner pleased, and turn-
 ing, stood.
 And in a moment after, wild Limours,
 Borne on a black horse, like a thunder-
 cloud
 Whose skirts are loosen'd by the
 breaking storm,
 Half ridden off with by the thing he
 rode,
 And all in passion uttering a dry
 shriek,
 Dash'd on Geraint, who closed with
 him, and bore
 Down by the length of lance and arm
 beyond
 The crupper, and so left him stunn'd
 or dead,
 And overthrew the next that follow'd
 him,
 And blindly rush'd on all the rout
 behind.
 But at the flash and motion of the man
 They vanish'd panic-stricken, like a
 shoal
 Of darting fish, that on a summer
 morn
 Adown the crystal dykes at Camelot
 Come slipping o'er their shadows on
 the sand,
 But if a man who stands upon the
 brink
 But lift a shining hand against the
 sun,
 There is not left the twinkle of a fin
 Betwixt the cressy islets white in
 flower;
 So, scared but at the motion of the
 man,
 Fled all the boon companions of the
 Earl,
 And left him lying in the public way;
 So vanish friendships only made in
 wine.

Then like a stormy sunlight smiled
 Geraint,
 Who saw the chargers of the two that
 fell
 Start from their fallen lords, and
 wildly fly,
 Mixt with the flyers. 'Horse and
 man,' he said,
 'All of one mind and all right-honest
 friends!
 Not a hoof left: and I methinks till
 now
 Was honest—paid with horses and
 with arms;
 I cannot steal or plunder, no nor beg:
 And so what say ye, shall we strip
 him there
 Your lover? has your palfrey heart
 enough
 To bear his armor? shall we fast, or
 dine?
 No?—then do thou, being right hon-
 est, pray
 That we may meet the horsemen of
 Earl Doorm,
 I too would still be honest.' Thus he
 said:
 And sadly gazing on her bridle-reins,
 And answering not one word, she led
 the way.

But as a man to whom a dreadful
 loss
 Falls in a far land and he knows it not,
 But coming back he learns it, and the
 loss
 So pains him that he sickens nigh to
 death;
 So fared it with Geraint, who being
 prick'd
 In combat with the follower of
 Limours,
 Bled underneath his armor secretly,
 And so rode on, nor told his gentle
 wife
 What ail'd him, hardly knowing it
 himself,
 Till his eye darken'd and his helmet
 wagg'd;
 And at a sudden swerving of the
 road,
 Tho' happily down on a bank of
 grass,

The Prince, without a word, from his horse fell.

And Enid heard the clashing of his fall,
Suddenly came, and at his side all pale
Dismounting, loosed the fastenings of his arms,
Nor let her true hand falter, nor blue eye
Moisten, till she had lighted on his wound,
And tearing off her veil of faded silk
Had bared her forehead to the blistering sun,
And swathed the hurt that drain'd her dear lord's life.
Then after all was done that hand could do,
She rested, and her desolation came
Upon her, and she wept beside the way.

And many past, but none regarded her,
For in that realm of lawless turbulence,
A woman weeping for her murder'd mate
Was cared as much for as a summer shower:
One took him for a victim of Earl Doorm,
Nor dared to waste a perilous pity on him:
Another hurrying past, a man-at-arms,
Rode on a mission to the bandit Earl;
Half whistling and half singing a coarse song,
He drove the dust against her veiless eyes:
Another, flying from the wrath of Earl Doorm
Before an ever-fancied arrow, made
The long way smoke beneath him in his fear;
At which her palfrey whinnying lifted heel,
And scour'd into the coppices and was lost,
While the great charger stood, grieved like a man.

But at the point of noon the huge Earl Doorm,
Broad-faced with under-fringe of russet beard,
Bound on a foray, rolling eyes of prey,
Came riding with a hundred lances up;
But ere he came, like one that hails a ship,
Cried out with a big voice, 'What, is he dead?'
'No, no, not dead!' she answer'd in all haste.
'Would some of your kind people take him up,
And bear him hence out of this cruel sun?
Most sure am I, quite sure, he is not dead.'

Then said Earl Doorm: 'Well, if he be not dead,
Why wail ye for him thus? ye seem a child.
And be he dead, I count you for a fool;
Your wailing will not quicken him: dead or not,
Ye mar a comely face with idiot tears.
Yet, since the face *is* comely—some of you,
Here, take him up, and bear him to our hall:
An if he live, we will have him of our band;
And if he die, why earth has earth enough
To hide him. See ye take the charger too,
A noble one.'

He spake, and past away,
But left two brawny spearmen, who advanced,
Each growling like a dog, when his good bone
Seems to be pluck'd at by the village boys
Who love to vex him eating, and he fears
To lose his bone, and lays his foot upon it,
Gnawing and growling: so the ruffians growl'd,

Fearing to lose, and all for a dead man,
 Their chance of booty from the morning's raid,
 Yet raised and laid him on a litter-bier,
 Such as they brought upon their forays out
 For those that might be wounded; laid him on it
 All in the hollow of his shield, and took
 And bore him to the naked hall of Doorm,
 (His gentle charger following him unled)
 And cast him and the bier in which he lay
 Down on an oaken settle in the hall,
 And then departed, hot in haste to join
 Their luckier mates, but growling as before,
 And cursing their lost time, and the dead man,
 And their own Earl, and their own souls, and her.
 They might as well have blest her: she was deaf
 To blessing or to cursing save from one.

So for long hours sat Enid by her lord,
 There in the naked hall, propping his head,
 And chafing his pale hands, and calling to him.
 Till at the last he waken'd from his swoon,
 And found his own dear bride propping his head,
 And chafing his faint hands, and calling to him;
 And felt the warm tears falling on his face;
 And said to his own heart, 'She weeps for me.'
 And yet lay still, and feign'd himself as dead,
 That he might prove her to the uttermost,
 And say to his own heart, 'She weeps for me.'

But in the falling afternoon return'd
 The huge Earl Doorm with plunder to the hall.
 His lusty spearmen follow'd him with noise:
 Each hurling down a heap of things that rang
 Against the pavement, cast his lance aside,
 And doff'd his helm: and then there flutter'd in,
 Half-bold, half-frighted, with dilated eyes,
 A tribe of women, dress'd in many hues,
 And mingled with the spearmen: and Earl Doorm
 Struck with a knife's haft hard against the board,
 And call'd for flesh and wine to feed his spears.
 And men brought in whole hogs and quarter beeves,
 And all the hall was dim with steam of flesh:
 And none spake word, but all sat down at once,
 And ate with tumult in the naked hall,
 Feeding like horses when you hear them feed;
 Till Enid shrank far back into herself,
 To shun the wild ways of the lawless tribe.
 But when Earl Doorm had eaten all he would,
 He roll'd his eyes about the hall, and found
 A damsel drooping in a corner of it.
 Then he remember'd her, and how she wept;
 And out of her there came a power upon him;
 And rising on the sudden he said,
 'Eat!
 I never yet beheld a thing so pale.
 God's curse, it makes me mad to see you weep.
 Eat! Look yourself. Good luck had your good man,
 For were I dead who is it would weep for me?
 Sweet lady, never since I first drew breath

Have I beheld a lily like yourself.
And so there lived some color in
your cheek,
There is not one among my gentle-
women
Were fit to wear your slipper for a
glove.
But listen to me, and by me be ruled,
And I will do the thing I have not
done,
For ye shall share my earldom with
me, girl,
And we will live like two birds in one
nest,
And I will fetch you forage from all
fields,
For I compel all creatures to my will.'

He spoke: the brawny spearman
let his cheek
Bulge with the unswallow'd piece, and
turning stared;
While some, whose souls the old ser-
pent long had drawn
Down, as the worm draws in the
wither'd leaf
And makes it earth, hiss'd each at
other's ear
What shall not be recorded—women
they,
Women, or what had been those
gracious things,
But now desired the humbling of their
best,
Yea, would have help'd him to it:
and all at once
They hated her, who took no thought
of them,
But answer'd in low voice, her meek
head yet
Drooping, 'I pray you of your cour-
tesy,
He being as he is, to let me be.'

She spake so low he hardly heard
her speak,
But like a mighty patron, satisfied
With what himself had done so gra-
ciously,
Assumed that she had thank'd him,
adding, 'Yea,
Eat and be glad, for I account you
mine.'

She answer'd meekly, 'How should
I be glad
Henceforth in all the world at any-
thing,
Until my lord arise and look upon
me?'

Here the huge Earl cried out upon
her talk,
As all but empty heart and weariness
And sickly nothing; suddenly seized
on her,
And bare her by main violence to the
board,
And thrust the dish before her, crying,
'Eat.'

'No, no,' said Enid, vext, 'I will
not eat
Till yonder man upon the bier arise,
And eat with me.' 'Drink, then,' he
answer'd. 'Here!'
(And fill'd a horn with wine and held
it to her,)
'Lo! I, myself, when flush'd with
fight, or hot,
God's curse, with anger—often I my-
self,
Before I well have drunken, scarce
can eat:
Drink therefore and the wine will
change your will.'

'Not so,' she cried, 'by Heaven, I
will not drink
Till my dear lord arise and bid me do
it,
And drink with me; and if he rise no
more,
I will not look at wine until I die.'

At this he turn'd all red and paced
his hall,
Now gnaw'd his under, now his upper
lip,
And coming up close to her, said at
last:
'Girl, for I see ye scorn my courtesies,
Take warning: yonder man is surely
dead;
And I compel all creatures to my will.
Not eat nor drink? And wherefore
wail for one,

Who put your beauty to this flout and
 scorn
 By dressing it in rags? Amazed am
 I,
 Beholding how ye butt against my
 wish,
 That I forbear you thus : cross me no
 more.
 At least put off to please me this poor
 gown,
 This silken rag, this beggar-woman's
 weed :
 I love that beauty should go beauti-
 fully :
 For see ye not my gentlewomen here,
 How gay, how suited to the house of
 one
 Who loves that beauty should go
 beautifully ?
 Rise therefore ; robe yourself in this :
 obey.'

He spoke, and one among his gentle-
 women
 Display'd a splendid silk of foreign
 loom,
 Where like a shoaling sea the lovely
 blue
 Play'd into green, and thicker down
 the front
 With jewels than the sward with
 drops of dew,
 When all night long a cloud clings to
 the hill,
 And with the dawn ascending lets the
 day
 Strike where it clung : so thickly shone
 the gems.

But Enid answer'd, harder to be
 moved
 Than hardest tyrants in their day of
 power,
 With life-long injuries burning una-
 venged,
 And now their hour has come ; and
 Enid said :

'In this poor gown my dear lord
 found me first,
 And loved me serving in my father's
 hall :
 In this poor gown I rode with him to
 court,

And there the Queen array'd me like
 the sun :
 In this poor gown he bad me clothe
 myself,
 When now we rode upon this fatal
 quest
 Of honor, where no honor can be
 gain'd :
 And this poor gown I will not cast
 aside
 Until himself arise a living man,
 And bid me cast it. I have griefs
 enough :
 Pray you be gentle, pray you let me
 be :
 I never loved, can never love but
 him :
 Yea, God, I pray you of your gentle-
 ness,
 He being as he is, to let me be.'

Then strode the brute Earl up and
 down his hall,
 And took his russet beard between
 his teeth ;
 Last, coming up quite close, and in
 his mood
 Crying, 'I count it of no more avail,
 Dame, to be gentle than ungentle
 with you ;
 Take my salute,' unknighly with
 flat hand,
 However lightly, smote her on the
 cheek.

Then Enid, in her utter helpless-
 ness,
 And since she thought, 'He had not
 dared to do it,
 Except he surely knew my lord was
 dead,'
 Sent forth a sudden sharp and bitter
 cry,
 As of a wild thing taken in a trap,
 Which sees the trapper coming thro'
 the wood.

This heard Geraint, and grasping at
 his sword,
 (It lay beside him in the hollow
 shield),
 Made but a single bound, and with a
 sweep of it

Shore thro' the swarthy neck, and like
a ball
The russet-bearded head roll'd on the
floor.
So died Earl Doorm by him he
counted dead.
And all the men and women in the
hall
Rose when they saw the dead man
rise, and fled
Yelling as from a spectre, and the
two
Were left alone together, and he
said :

'Enid, I have used you worse than
that dead man ;
Done you more wrong : we both have
undergone
That trouble which has left me thrice
your own :
Henceforward I will rather die than
doubt.
And here I lay this penance on my-
self,
Not, tho' mine own ears heard you
yesternorn—
You thought me sleeping, but I heard
you say,
I heard you say, that you were no
true wife :
I swear I will not ask your meaning
in it :
I do believe yourself against yourself,
And will henceforward rather die
than doubt.'

And Enid could not say one tender
word,
She felt so blunt and stupid at the
heart :
She only pray'd him, 'Fly, they will
return
And slay you ; fly, your charger is
without,
My palfrey lost.' 'Then, Enid, shall
you ride
Behind me.' 'Yea,' said Enid, 'let
us go.'
And moving out they found the
stately horse,
Who now no more a vassal to the
thief,

But free to stretch his limbs in lawful
fight,
Neigh'd with all gladness as they
came, and stoop'd
With a low whinny toward the pair :
and she
Kiss'd the white star upon his noble
front,
Glad also ; then Geraint upon the
horse
Mounted, and reach'd a hand, and on
his foot
She set her own and climb'd ; he
turn'd his face
And kiss'd her climbing, and she
cast her arms
About him, and at once they rode
away.

And never yet, since high in Paradise
O'er the four rivers the first roses
blew,
Came purer pleasure unto mortal
kind
Than lived thro' her, who in that per-
lous hour
Put hand to hand beneath her hus-
band's heart,
And felt him hers again : she did not
weep,
But o'er her meek eyes came a happy
mist
Like that which kept the heart of
Eden green
Before the useful trouble of the rain :
Yet not so misty were her meek blue
eyes
As not to see before them on the
path,
Right in the gateway of the bandit
bold,
A knight of Arthur's court, who laid
his lance
In rest, and made as if to fall upon
him.
Then, fearing for his hurt and loss of
blood,
She, with her mind all full of what
had chanced,
Shriek'd to the stranger 'Slay not a
dead man !'
'The voice of Enid,' said the knight ;
but she,

Beholding it was Edyrn son of
 Nudd,
 Was moved so much the more, and
 shriek'd again,
 'O cousin, slay not him who gave you
 life.'
 And Edyrn moving frankly forward
 spake:
 'My lord Geraint, I greet you with all
 love;
 I took you for a bandit knight of
 Doorm;
 And fear not, Enid, I should fall
 upon him,
 Who love you, Prince, with some-
 thing of the love
 Wherewith we love the Heaven that
 chastens us.
 For once when I was up so high in
 pride
 That I was halfway down the slope to
 Hell,
 By overthrowing me you threw me
 higher.
 Now, made a knight of Arthur's Table
 Round,
 And since I knew this Earl, when I
 myself
 Was half a bandit in my lawless
 hour,
 I come the mouthpiece of our King
 to Doorm
 (The King is close behind me) bidding
 him
 Disband himself, and scatter all his
 powers,
 Submit, and hear the judgment of the
 King.'

'He hears the judgment of the
 King of kings,'
 Cried the wan Prince; 'and lo, the
 powers of Doorm
 Are scatter'd,' and he pointed to the
 field,
 Where, huddled here and there on
 mound and knoll,
 Were men and women staring and
 aghast,
 While some yet fled; and then he
 plainlier told
 How the huge Earl lay slain within
 his hall.

But when the knight besought him,
 'Follow me,
 Prince, to the camp, and in the King's
 own ear
 Speak what has chanced; ye surely
 have endured
 Strange chances here alone;' that
 other flush'd,
 And hung his head, and halted in
 reply,
 Fearing the mild face of the blameless
 King,
 And after madness acted question
 ask'd:
 Till Edyrn crying, 'If ye will not go
 To Arthur, then will Arthur come to
 you,'
 'Enough,' he said, 'I follow,' and they
 went.
 But Enid in their going had two fears,
 One from the bandit scatter'd in the
 field,
 And one from Edyrn. Every now
 and then,
 When Edyrn rein'd his charger at her
 side,
 She shrank a little. In a hollow land,
 From which old fires have broken,
 men may fear
 Fresh fire and ruin. He, perceiving,
 said:

'Fair and dear cousin, you that
 most had cause
 To fear me, fear no longer, I am
 changed.
 Yourself were first the blameless
 cause to make
 My nature's prideful sparkle in the
 blood
 Break into furious flame; being re-
 pulsed
 By Yniol and yourself, I schemed and
 wrought
 Until I overturn'd him; then set up
 (With one main purpose ever at my
 heart)
 My haughty jousts, and took a para-
 mour;
 Did her mock-honor as the fairest fair,
 And, toppling over all antagonism,
 So wax'd in pride, that I believed
 myself.



"THEY BORE UP THE BROAD STAIRS."—Page 79

Unconquerable, for I was wellnigh
mad:
And, but for my main purpose in these
jousts,
I should have slain your father, seized
yourself.
I lived in hope that sometime you
would come
To these my lists with him whom
best you loved;
And there, poor cousin, with your
meek blue eyes,
The truest eyes that ever answer'd
Heaven,
Behold me overturn and trample on
him.
Then, had you cried, or knelt, or
pray'd to me,
I should not less have kill'd him.
And you came,—
But once you came,—and with your
own true eyes
Beheld the man you loved (I speak as
one
Speaks of a service done him) over-
throw
My proud self, and my purpose three
years old,
And set his foot upon me, and give
me life.
There was I broken down; there was
I saved:
Tho' thence I rode all-shamed, hating
the life
He gave me, meaning to be rid of it.
And all the penance the Queen laid
upon me
Was but to rest awhile within her
court;
Where first as sullen as a beast new-
caged,
And waiting to be treated like a wolf,
Because I knew my deeds were
known, I found,
Instead of scornful pity or pure scorn,
Such fine reserve and noble reticence,
Manners so kind, yet stately, such a
grace
Of tenderest courtesy, that I began
To glance behind me at my former
life,
And find that it had been the wolf's
indeed:

And oft I talk'd with Dubric, the high
saint,
Who, with mild heat of holy oratory,
Subdued me somewhat to that gentle-
ness,
Which, when it weds with manhood,
makes a man.
And you were often there about the
Queen,
But saw me not, or mark'd not if you
saw;
Nor did I care or dare to speak with
you,
But kept myself aloof till I was
changed;
And fear not, cousin; I am changed
indeed.'

He spoke, and Enid easily believed,
Like simple noble natures, credulous
Of what they long for, good in friend
or foe,
There most in those who most have
done them ill.
And when they reach'd the camp the
King himself
Advanced to greet them, and behold-
ing her
Tho' pale, yet happy, ask'd her not a
word,
But went apart with Edyrn, whom he
held
In converse for a little, and return'd,
And, gravely smiling, lifted her from
horse,
And kiss'd her with all pureness,
brotherlike,
And show'd an empty tent allotted her,
And glancing for a minute, till he saw
her
Pass into it, turn'd to the Prince, and
said:

'Prince, when of late ye pray'd me
for my leave
To move to your own land, and there
defend
Your marches, I was prick'd with
some reproof,
As one that let foul wrong stagnate
and be,
By having look'd too much thro' alien
eyes,

And wrought too long with delegated
hands,
Not used mine own : but now behold
me come
To cleanse this common sewer of all
my realm,
With Edyrn and with others : have ye
look'd
At Edyrn ? have ye seen how nobly
changed ?
This work of his is great and wonder-
ful.
His very face with change of heart is
changed.
The world will not believe a man re-
pents :
And this wise world of ours is mainly
right.
Full seldom doth a man repent, or
use
Both grace and will to pick the vicious
quitch
Of blood and custom wholly out of
him,
And make all clean, and plant himself
afresh.
Edyrn has done it, weeding all his
heart
As I will weed this land before I go.
I, therefore, made him of our Table
Round,
Not rashly, but have proved him
everyway
One of our noblest, our most valorous,
Sanest and most obedient : and indeed
This work of Edyrn wrought upon
himself
After a life of violence, seems to me
A thousand-fold more great and won-
derful
Than if some knight of mine, risking
his life,
My subject with my subjects under
him,
Should make an onslaught single on a
realm
Of robbers, tho' he slew them one by
one,
And were himself nigh wounded to
the death.'

So spake the King ; low bow'd the
Prince, and felt

His work was neither great nor won-
derful,
And past to Enid's tent ; and thither
came
The King's own leech to look into his
hurt ;
And Enid tended on him there ; and
there
Her constant motion round him, and
the breath
Of her sweet tendance hovering over
him,
Fill'd all the genial courses of his
blood
With deeper and with ever deeper love
As the south-west that blowing Bala
lake
Fills all the sacred Dee. So past the
days.

But while Geraint lay healing of his
hurt,
The blameless King went forth and
cast his eyes
On each of all whom Uther left in
charge
Long since, to guard the justice of the
King :
He look'd and found them wanting ;
and as now
Men weed the white horse on the
Berkshire hills
To keep him bright and clean as
heretofore,
He rooted out the slothful officer
Or guilty, which for bribe had wink'd
at wrong,
And in their chairs set up a stronger
race
With hearts and hands, and sent a
thousand men
To till the wastes, and moving every-
where
Clear'd the dark places and let in the
law,
And broke the bandit holds and
cleansed the land.

Then, when Geraint was whole
again, they past
With Arthur to Caerleon upon Usk.
There the great Queen once more em-
braced her friend,

And clothed her in apparel like the
day.
And tho' Geraint could never take
again
That comfort from their converse
which he took
Before the Queen's fair name was
breathed upon,
He rested well content that all was
well.
Thence after tarrying for a space they
rode,
And fifty knights rode with them to
the shores
Of Severn, and they past to their own
land.
And there he kept the justice of the
King
So vigorously yet mildly, that all
hearts
Applauded, and the spiteful whisper
died:
And being ever foremost in the chase,
And victor at the tilt and tournament,
They call'd him the great Prince and
man of men.
But Enid, whom her ladies loved to
call
Enid the Fair, a grateful people
named
Enid the Good; and in their halls
arose
The cry of children, Enids and Ge-
raints
Of times to be; nor did he doubt her
more,
But rested in her fealty, till he crown'd
A happy life with a fair death, and
fell
Against the heathen of the Northern
Sea
In battle, fighting for the blameless
King.

BALIN AND BALAN.

PELLAM the King, who held and lost
with Lot
In that first war, and had his realm
restored
But render'd tributary, fail'd of late
To send his tribute; wherefore
Arthur call'd

His treasurer, one of many years, and
spake,
'Go thou with him and him and bring
it to us,
Lest we should set one truer on his
throne.
Man's word is God in man.'

His Baron said
'We go but harken: there be two
strange knights
Who sit near Camelot at a fountain
side,
A mile beneath the forest, challenging
And overthrowing every knight who
comes.
Wilt thou I undertake them as we pass,
And send them to thee?

Arthur laugh'd upon him.
'Old friend, too old to be so young,
depart,
Delay not thou for ought, but let them
sit,
Until they find a lustier than them-
selves.'

So these departed. Early, one fair
dawn,
The light-wing'd spirit of his youth
return'd
On Arthur's heart; he arm'd himself
and went,
So coming to the fountain-side beheld
Balin and Balan sitting statuelike,
Brethren, to right and left the spring,
that down,
From underneath a plume of lady-fern,
Sang, and the sand danced at the bot-
tom of it.
And on the right of Balin Balin's
horse
Was fast beside an alder, on the left
Of Balan Balan's near a poplartree.
'Fair Sirs,' said Arthur, 'wherefore
sit ye here?'
Balin and Balan answer'd 'For the
sake
Of glory; we be mightier men than all
In Arthur's court; that also have we
proved;
For whatsoever knight against us
came

Or I or he have easily overthrown.'
 'I too,' said Arthur, 'am of Arthur's
 hall,
 But rather proven in his Paynim wars
 Than famous jousts; but see, or
 proven or not,
 Whether me likewise ye can over-
 throw.'
 And Arthur lightly smote the brethren
 down,
 And lightly so return'd, and no man
 knew.

Then Balin rose, and Balan, and
 beside
 The carolling water set themselves
 again,
 And spake no word until the shadow
 turn'd;
 When from the fringe of coppice
 round them burst
 A spangled pursuivant, and crying
 'Sirs,
 Rise, follow! ye be sent for by the
 King,'
 They follow'd; whom when Arthur
 seeing ask'd
 'Tell me your names; why sat ye by
 the well?'
 Balin the stillness of a minute broke
 Saying 'An unmelodious name to thee,
 Balin, "the Savage"—that addition
 thine—
 My brother and my better, this man
 here,
 Balan. I smote upon the naked skull
 A thrall of thine in open hall, my
 hand
 Was gauntleted, half slew him; for I
 heard
 He had spoken evil of me; thy just
 wrath
 Sent me a three-years' exile from thine
 eyes.
 I have not lived my life delightfully:
 For I that did that violence to thy
 thrall,
 Had often wrought some fury on my-
 self,
 Saving for Balan: those three king-
 less years
 Have past—were wormwood-bitter to
 me. King,

Methought that if we sat beside the
 well,
 And hurl'd to ground what knight
 soever spurr'd
 Against us, thou would'st take me
 gladlier back,
 And make, as ten-times worthier to be
 thine
 Than twenty Balins, Balan knight. I
 have said.
 Not so—not all. A man of thine to-day
 Abash'd us both, and brake my boast.
 Thy will?'
 Said Arthur 'Thou hast ever spoken
 truth;
 Thy too fierce manhood would not let
 thee lie.
 Rise, my true knight. As children
 learn, be thou
 Wiser for falling! walk with me, and
 move
 To music with thine Order and the
 King.
 Thy chair, a grief to all the brethren,
 stands
 Vacant, but thou retake it, mine
 again!'

Thereafter, when Sir Balin enter'd
 hall,
 The Lost one Found was greeted as
 in Heaven
 With joy that blazed itself in wood-
 land wealth
 Of leaf, and gayest garlandage of
 flowers,
 Along the walls and down the board;
 they sat,
 And cup clash'd cup; they drank and
 some one sang,
 Sweet-voiced, a song of welcome,
 whereupon
 Their common shout in chorus, mount-
 ing, made
 Those banners of twelve battles over-
 head
 Stir, as they stirr'd of old, when
 Arthur's host
 Proclaim'd him Victor, and the day
 was won.

Then Balan added to their Order
 lived

A wealthier life than heretofore with
these
And Balin, till their embassy
return'd.

'Sir King' they brought report 'we
hardly found,
So bush'd about it is with gloom, the
hall

Of him to whom ye sent us, Pellam,
once

A Christless foe of thine as ever dash'd
Horse against horse; but seeing that
thy realm

Hath prosper'd in the name of Christ,
the King

Took, as in-rival heat, to holy things;
And finds himself descended from the
Saint

Arimathæan Joseph; him who first
Brought the great faith to Britain
over seas;

He boasts his life as purer than thine
own;

Eats scarce enow to keep his pulse
abeat;

Hath push'd aside his faithful wife,
nor lets

Or dame or damsel enter at his gates
Lest he should be polluted. This
gray King

Show'd us a shrine wherein were
wonders—yea—

Rich arks with priceless bones of
martyrdom,

Thorns of the crown and shivers of
the cross,

And therewithal (for thus he told us)
brought

By holy Joseph hither, that same
spear

Wherewith the Roman pierced the
side of Christ.

He much amazed us; after, when we
sought

The tribute, answer'd "I have quite
foregone

All matters of this world: Garlon,
mine heir,

Of him demand it," which this Gar-
lon gave

With much ado, railing at thine and
thee.

But when we left, in those deep
woods we found

A knight of thine spear-stricken from
behind,

Dead, whom we buried; more than
one of us

Cried out on Garlon, but a woodman
there

Reported of some demon in the
woods

Was once a man, who driven by evil
tongues

From all his fellows, lived alone, and
came

To learn black magic, and to hate his
kind

With such a hate, that when he died,
his soul

Became a Fiend, which, as the man in
life

Was wounded by blind tongues he
saw not whence,

Strikes from behind. This woodman
show'd the cave

From which he sallies, and wherein
he dwelt.

We saw the hoof-print of a horse, no
more.'

Then Arthur, 'Let who goes before
me, see

He do not fall behind me: foully
slain

And villainously! who will hunt for
me

This demon of the woods?' Said
Balan, 'I'!

So claim'd the quest and rode away,
but first,

Embracing Balin, 'Good my brother,
hear!

Let not thy moods prevail, when I am
gone

Who used to lay them! hold them
outer fiends,

Who leap at thee to tear thee; shake
them aside,

Dreams ruling when wit sleeps! yea,
but to dream

That any of these would wrong thee,
wrongs thyself.

Witness their flowery welcome.
Bound are they

To speak no evil. Truly safe for
fears,
My fears for thee, so rich a fellowship
Would make me wholly blest: thou
one of them,
Be one indeed: consider them, and
all
Their bearing in their common bond
of love,
No more of hatred than in Heaven
itself,
No more of jealousy than in Para-
dise.'

So Balan warn'd, and went; Balin
remain'd:
Who—for but three brief moons had
glanced away
From being knighted till he smote the
thrall,
And faded from the presence into
years
Of exile—now would strictlier set
himself
To learn what Arthur meant by
courtesy,
Manhood, and knighthood; wherefore
hover'd round
Lancelot, but when he mark'd his
high sweet smile
In passing, and a transitory word
Make knight or churl or child or dam-
sel seem
From being smiled at happier in them-
selves—
Sigh'd, as a boy lame-born beneath a
height,
That glooms his valley, sighs to see
the peak
Sun-flush'd, or touch at night the
northern star;
For one from out his village lately
climb'd
And brought report of azure lands
and fair,
Far seen to left and right; and he
himself
Hath hardly scaled with help a hun-
dred feet
Up from the base: so Balin marvel-
ling oft
How far beyond him Lancelot seem'd
to move,

Groan'd, and at times would mutter,
'These be gifts,
Born with the blood, not learnable,
divine,
Beyond *my* reach. Well had I
foughten—well—
In those fierce wars, struck hard—and
had I crown'd
With my slain self the heaps of whom
I slew—
So—better!—But this worship of the
Queen,
That honor too wherein she holds
him—this,
This was the sunshine that hath given
the man
A growth, a name that branches o'er
the rest,
And strength against all odds, and
what the King
So prizes—overprizes—gentleness.
Her likewise would I worship an I
might.
I never can be close with her, as he
That brought her hither. Shall I
pray the King
To let me bear some token of his
Queen
Whereon to gaze, remembering her—
forget
My heats and violences? live afresh?
What, if the Queen disdain'd to grant
it! nay
Being so stately-gentle, would she
make
My darkness blackness? and with
how sweet grace
She greeted my return! Bold will
I be—
Some goodly cognizance of Guinevere,
In lieu of this rough beast upon my
shield,
Langued gules, and tooth'd with grin-
ning savagery.'

And Arthur, when Sir Balin sought
him, said
'What wilt thou bear?' Balin was
bold, and ask'd
To bear her own crown-royal upon
shield,
Whereat she smiled and turn'd next to
the King,

Who answer'd 'Thou shalt put the
crown to use.

The crown is but the shadow of the
King,

And this a shadow's shadow, let him
have it,

So this will help him of his violences!'

'No shadow' said Sir Balin 'O my
Queen,

But light to me! no shadow, O my
King

But golden earnest of a gentler life!'

So Balin bare the crown, and all
the knights

Approved him, and the Queen, and all
the world

Made music, and he felt his being
move

In music with his Order, and the
King.

The nightingale, full-toned in mid-
dle May,

Hath ever and anon a note so thin
It seems another voice in other

groves;
Thus, after some quick burst of sud-
den wrath,

The music in him seem'd to change,
and grow

Faint and far-off.

And once he saw the thrall
His passion half had gauntleted to

death,
That causer of his banishment and

shame,
Smile at him, as he deem'd, presump-
tuously:

His arm half rose to strike again, but
fell:

The memory of that cognizance on
shield

Weighted it down, but in himself he
moan'd:

'Too high this mount of Camelot
for me:

These high-set courtesies are not for
me.

Shall I not rather prove the worse for
these?

Fierier and stormier from restraining,
break

Into some madness ev'n before the
Queen?'

Thus, as a hearth lit in a mountain
home,

And glancing on the window, when
the gloom

Of twilight deepens round it, seems a
flame

That rages in the woodland far below,
So when his moods were darken'd,

court and King
And all the kindly warmth of Arthur's

hall
Shadow'd an angry distance: yet he

strove
To learn the graces of their Table,

fought
Hard with himself, and seem'd at

length in peace.

Then chanced, one morning, that
Sir Balin sat

Close-bower'd in that garden nigh the
hall.

A walk of roses ran from door to
door;

A walk of lilies crost it to the bower:
And down that range of roses the

great Queen
Came with slow steps, the morning on

her face;
And all in shadow from the counter

door
Sir Lancelot as to meet her, then at

once,
As if he saw not, glanced aside, and

paced
The long white walk of lilies toward
the bower.

Follow'd the Queen; Sir Balin heard
her 'Prince,

Art thou so little loyal to thy Queen,
As pass without good morrow to thy

Queen?'

To whom Sir Lancelot with his eyes
on earth,

'Fain would I still be loyal to the
Queen.'

'Yea so' she said 'but so to pass me
by—

So loyal scarce is loyal to thyself,
Whom all men rate the king of cour-
tesy.

Let be: ye stand, fair lord, as in a
dream.'

Then Lancelot with his hand among
the flowers

'Yea—for a dream. Last night me-
thought I saw

That maiden Saint who stands with
lily in hand

In yonder shrine. All round her
prest the dark,

And all the light upon her silver face
Flow'd from the spiritual lily that she
held.

Lo! these her emblems drew mine
eyes—away:

For see, how perfect-pure! As light
a flush

As hardly tints the blossom of the
quince

Would mar their charm of stainless
maidenhood.'

'Sweeter to me' she said 'this
garden rose

Deep-hued and many-folded! sweeter
still

The wild-wood hyacinth and the bloom
of May.

Prince, we have ridd'n before among
the flowers

In those fair days—not all as cool as
these,

Tho' season-earlier. Art thou sad?
or sick?

Our noble King will send thee his
own leech—

Sick? or for any matter anger'd at me?'

Then Lancelot lifted his large eyes;
they dwelt

Deep-tranced on hers, and could not
fall: her hue

Changed at his gaze: so turning side
by side

They past, and Balin started from his
bower.

'Queen? subject? but I see not
what I see.

Damsel and lover? hear not what I
hear.

My father hath begotten me in his
wrath.

I suffer from the things before me,
know,

Learn nothing; am not worthy to be
knight;

A churl, a clown!' and in him gloom
on gloom

Deepen'd: he sharply caught his lance
and shield,

Nor stay'd to crave permission of the
king,

But, mad for strange adventure, dash'd
away.

He took the selfsame track as Balan,
saw

The fountain where they sat together,
sigh'd

'Was I not better there with him?'
and rode

The skyless woods, but under open
blue

Came on the hoarhead woodman at a
bough

Wearily hewing. 'Churl, thine axe!'
he cried,

Descended, and disjointed it at a blow:
To whom the woodman utter'd won-
deringly

'Lord, thou couldst lay the Devil of
these woods

If arm of flesh could lay him.' Balin
cried

'Him, or the viler devil who plays his
part,

To lay that devil would lay the Devil
in me.'

'Nay' said the churl, 'our devil is a
truth,

I saw the flash of him but yestereven.
And some *do* say that our Sir Garlon

too

Hath learn'd black magic, and to ride
unseen.

Look to the cave.' But Balin answer'd
him

'Old fabler, these be fancies of the
churl,

Look to thy woodcraft,' and so leav-
ing him,

Now with slack rein and careless of
himself,
Now with dug spur and raving at him-
self,
Now with droopt brow down the long
glades he rode;
So mark'd not on his right a cavern-
chasm
Yawn over darkness, where, nor far
within,
The whole day died, but, dying,
gleam'd on rocks
Roof-pendent, sharp; and others from
the floor,
Tusklike, arising, made that mouth of
night
Whereout the Demon issued up from
Hell.
He mark'd not this, but blind and deaf
to all
Save that chain'd rage, which ever
yelp'd within,
Past eastward from the falling sun.
At once
He felt the hollow-beaten mosses
thud
And tremble, and then the shadow of
a spear,
Shot from behind him, ran along the
ground.
Sideways he started from the path,
and saw,
With pointed lance as if to pierce, a
shape,
A light of armor by him flash, and
pass
And vanish in the woods; and fol-
low'd this,
But all so blind in rage that unawares
He burst his lance against a forest
bough,
Dishorsed himself, and rose again, and
fled
Far, till the castle of a King, the hall
Of Pellam, lichen-bearded, grayly
draped
With streaming grass, appear'd, low-
built but strong;
The ruinous donjon as a knoll of
moss,
The battlement overtopped with ivytods,
A home of bats, in every tower an
owl.

Then spake the men of Pellam cry-
ing 'Lord,
Why wear ye this crown-royal upon
shield?'
Said Balin 'For the fairest and the
best
Of ladies living gave me this to bear.'
So stall'd his horse, and strode across
the court,
But found the greetings both of knight
and King
Faint in the low dark hall of banquet:
leaves
Laid their green faces flat against the
panes,
Sprays grated, and the canker'd
boughs without
Whined in the wood; for all was
hush'd within,
Till when at feast Sir Garlon likewise
ask'd
'Why wear ye that crown-royal?'
Balin said
'The Queen we worship, Lancelot, I,
and all,
As fairest, best and purest, granted me
To bear it!' Such a sound (for
Arthur's knights
Were hated strangers in the hall) as
makes
The white swan-mother, sitting, when
she hears
A strange knee rustle thro' her secret
reeds,
Made Garlon, hissing; then he sourly
smiled.
'Fairest I grant her: I have seen;
but best,
Best, purest? *thou* from Arthur's hall,
and yet
So simple! hast thou eyes, or if, are
these
So far besotted that they fail to see
This fair wife-worship cloaks a secret
shame?
Truly, ye men of Arthur be but babes.'

A goblet on the board by Balin,
boss'd
With holy Joseph's legend, on his
right
Stood, all of massiest bronze: one side
had sea

And ship and sail and angels blowing
on it:
And one was rough with wattling,
and the walls
Of that low church he built at Glaston-
bury.
This Balin graspt, but while in act to
hurl,
Thro' memory of that token on the
shield
Relax'd his hold: 'I will be gentle' he
thought
'And passing gentle' caught his hand
away.
Then fiercely to Sir Garlon 'eyes have I
That saw to-day the shadow of a spear,
Shot from behind me, run along the
ground;
Eyes too that long have watch'd how
Lancelot draws
From homage to the best and purest,
might,
Name, manhood, and a grace, but
scantly thine,
Who, sitting in thine own hall, canst
endure
To mouth so huge a foulness—to thy
guest,
Me, me of Arthur's Table. Felon
talk!
Let be! no more!'

But not the less by night
The scorn of Garlon, poisoning all his
rest,
Stung him in dreams. At length, and
dim thro' leaves
Blinkt the white morn, sprays grated,
and old boughs
Whined in the wood. He rose, de-
scended, met
The scorner in the castle court, and
fain,
For hate and loathing, would have
past him by;
But when Sir Garlon utter'd mocking-
wise;
'What, wear ye still that same crown-
scandalous?'
His countenance blacken'd, and his
forehead veins
Bloated, and branch'd; and tearing
out of sheath

The brand, Sir Balin with a fiery 'Ha!
So thou be shadow, here I make thee
ghost,'
Hard upon helm smote him, and the
blade flew
Splintering in six, and clinkt upon the
stones.
Then Garlon, reeling slowly back-
ward, fell,
And Balin by the banneret of his helm
Dragg'd him, and struck, but from the
castle a cry
Sounded across the court, and—men-
at-arms,
A score with pointed lances, making
at him—
He dash'd the pummel at the fore-
most face,
Beneath a low door dipt, and made his
feet
Wings thro' a glimmering gallery, till
he mark'd
The portal of King Pellam's chapel
wide
And inward to the wall; he stept
behind;
Thence in a moment heard them pass
like wolves
Howling; but while he stared about
the shrine,
In which he scare could spy the Christ
for Saints,
Beheld before a golden altar lie
The longest lance his eyes had ever
seen,
Point-painted red; and seizing there-
upon
Push'd thro' an open casement down,
lean'd on it,
Leapt in a semicircle, and lit on earth;
Then hand at ear, and harkening from
what side
The blindfold rummage buried in the
walls
Might echo, ran the counter path, and
found
His charger, mounted on him and
away.
An arrow whizz'd to the right, one to
the left,
One overhead; and Pellam's feeble cry
'Stay, stay him! he defileth heavenly
things

With earthly uses'—made him quickly
dive
Beneath the boughs, and race thro'
many a mile
Of dense and open, till his goodly
horse,
Arising wearily at a fallen oak,
Stumbled headlong, and cast him face
to ground.

Half-wroth he had not ended, but
all glad,
Knightlike, to find his charger yet
unlamed,
Sir Balin drew the shield from off his
neck,
Stared at the priceless cognizance,
and thought
'I have shamed thee so that now thou
shamest me,
Thee will I bear no more,' high on a
branch
Hung it, and turn'd aside into the
woods,
And there in gloom cast himself all
along,
Moaning 'My violences, my vio-
lences!'

But now the wholesome music of
the wood
Was dumb'd by one from out the hall
of Mark,
A damsel-errant, warbling, as she rode
The woodland alleys, Vivien, with her
Squire.

'The fire of Heaven has kill'd the
barren cold,
And kindled all the plain and all the
wold.
The new leaf ever pushes off the old,
The fire of Heaven is not the flame of
Hell.

Old priest, who mumble worship in
your quire—
Old monk and nun, ye scorn the
world's desire,
Yet in your frosty cells ye feel the
fire!
The fire of Heaven is not the flame of
Hell.

The fire of Heaven is on the dusty
ways.
The wayside blossoms open to the
blaze.
The whole wood-world is one full peal
of praise.
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The fire of Heaven is Lord of all
things good,
And starve not thou this fire within
thy blood,
But follow Vivien thro' the fiery flood!
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Hell!'

Then turning to her Squire 'This
fire of Heaven,
This old sun-worship, boy, will rise
again,
And beat the cross to earth, and break
the King
And all his Table.'

Then they reach'd a glade,
Where under one long lane of cloud-
less air
Before another wood, the royal crown
Sparkled, and swaying upon a restless
elm
Drew the vague glance of Vivien, and
her Squire;
Amazed were these; 'Lo there' she
cried—'a crown—
Borne by some high lord-prince of
Arthur's hall,
And there a horse! the rider? where
is he?
See, yonder lies one dead within the
wood.
Not dead; he stirs!—but sleeping. I
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Hail, royal knight, we break on thy
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Not, doubtless, all unearn'd by noble
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A lustful King, who sought to win my
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 And one was rough with wattling,
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 Eyes too that long have watch'd how
 Lancelot draws
 From homage to the best and purest,
 might,
 Name, manhood, and a grace, but
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 To mouth so huge a foulness—to thy
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thy blood,
But follow Vivien thro' the fiery flood!
The fire of Heaven is not the flame of
Hell!'

Then turning to her Squire 'This
fire of Heaven,
This old sun-worship, boy, will rise
again,
And beat the cross to earth, and break
the King
And all his Table.'

Then they reach'd a glade,
Where under one long lane of cloud-
less air
Before another wood, the royal crown
Sparkled, and swaying upon a restless
elm
Drew the vague glance of Vivien, and
her Squire;
Amazed were these; 'Lo there' she
cried—'a crown—
Borne by some high lord-prince of
Arthur's hall,
And there a horse! the rider? where
is he?
See, yonder lies one dead within the
wood.
Not dead; he stirs!—but sleeping. I
will speak.
Hail, royal knight, we break on thy
sweet rest,
Not, doubtless, all unearn'd by noble
deeds.
But bounden art thou, if from Arthur's
hall,
To help the weak. Behold, I fly from
shame,
A lustful King, who sought to win my
love

Thro' evil ways: the knight, with
whom I rode,
Hath suffer'd misadventure, and my
squire
Hath in him small defence; but thou,
Sir Prince,
Wilt surely guide me to the warrior
King,
Arthur the blameless, pure as any
maid,
To get me shelter for my maidenhood.
I charge thee by that crown upon thy
shield,
And by the great Queen's name, arise
and hence.'

And Balin rose, 'Thither no more!
nor Prince
Nor knight am I, but one that hath
defamed
The cognizance she gave me: here I
dwell
Savage among the savage woods, here
die—
Die: let the wolves' black maws en-
sepulchre
Their brother beast, whose anger was
his lord.
O me, that such a name as Guinevere's,
Which our high Lancelot hath so
lifted up,
And been thereby uplifted, should
thro' me,
My violence, and my villainy, come to
shame.'

Thereat she suddenly laugh'd and
shrill, anon
Sigh'd all as suddenly. Said Balin to
her
'Is this thy courtesy—to mock me, ha?
Hence, for I will not with thee.' Again
she sigh'd
'Pardon, sweet lord! we maidens often
laugh
When sick at heart, when rather we
should weep.
I knew thee wrong'd. I brake upon
thy rest,
And now full loth am I to break thy
dream,
But thou art man, and canst abide a
truth,

Tho' bitter. Hither, boy—and mark
me well.

Dost thou remember at Caerleon
once—

A year ago—nay, then I love thee not—
Ay, thou rememberest well—one sum-
mer dawn—

By the great tower—Caerleon upon
Usk—

Nay, truly we were hidden: this fair
lord,

The flower of all their vestal knight-
hood, knelt

In amorous homage—knelt—what
else?—O ay

Knelt, and drew down from out his
night-black hair

And mumbled that white hand whose
ring'd caress

Had wander'd from her own King's
golden head,

And lost itself in darkness, till she
cried—

I thought the great tower would crash
down on both—

"Rise, my sweet King, and kiss me on
the lips,

Thou art my King." This lad, whose
lightest word

Is mere white truth in simple naked-
ness,

Saw them embrace: he reddens, can-
not speak,

So bashful, he! but all the maiden
Saints,

The deathless mother-maidenhood of
Heaven

Cry out upon her. Up then, ride with
me!

Talk not of shame! thou canst not,
an thou would'st,

Do these more shame than these have
done themselves.'

She lied with ease; but horror-
stricken he,

Remembering that dark bower at
Camelot,

Breathed in a dismal whisper 'It is
truth.'

Sunnily she smiled 'And even in
this lone wood,

Sweet lord, ye do right well to whisper
this.

Fools prate, and perish traitors.
Woods have tongues,

As walls have ears: but thou shalt go
with me,

And we will speak at first exceeding
low.

Meet is it the good King be not de-
ceived.

See now, I set thee high on vantage
ground,

From whence to watch the time, and
eagle-like

Stoop at thy will on Lancelot and the
Queen."

She ceased; his evil spirit upon him
leapt,

He ground his teeth together, sprang
with a yell,

Tore from the branch, and cast on
earth, the shield,

Drove his mail'd heel athwart the
royal crown,

Stamp'd all into defacement, hurl'd it
from him

Among the forest weeds, and cursed
the tale,

The told-of, and the teller.

That weird yell,
Unearthlier than all shriek of bird or
beast,

Thrill'd thro' the woods; and Balan
lurking there

(His quest was unaccomplish'd) heard
and thought

'The scream of that Wood-devil I
came to quell!'

Then nearing 'Lo! he hath slain some
brother-knight,

And tramples on the goodly shield to
show

His loathing of our Order and the
Queen.

My quest, meseems, is here. Or devil
or man

Guard thou thine head.' Sir Balin
spake not word,

But snatch'd a sudden buckler from
the Squire,

And vaulted on his horse, and so they
crash'd

In onset, and King Pellam's holy
spear,

Reputed to be red with sinless blood,
Redden'd at once with sinful, for the

point
Across the maiden shield of Balan

prick'd
The hauberk to the flesh; and Balin's

horse
Was wearied to the death, and, when

they clash'd,
Rolling back upon Balin, crush'd the

man
Inward, and either fell, and swoon'd
away.

Then to her Squire mutter'd the
damsel 'Fools!

This fellow hath wrought some foul-
ness with his Queen:

Else never had he borne her crown,
nor raved

And thus foam'd over at a rival
name:

But thou, Sir Chick, that scarce hast
broken shell,

Art yet half-yolk, not even come to
down—

Who never sawest Caerleon upon
Usk—

And yet hast often pleaded for my
love—

See what I see, be thou where I have
been,

Or else Sir Chick—dismount and
loose their casques

I fain would know what manner of
men they be.'

And when the Squire had loosed
them, 'Goodly!—look!

They might have cropt the myriad
flower of May,

And butt each other here, like brain-
less bulls,

Dead for one heifer!'

Then the gentle Squire
'I hold them happy, so they died for
love:

And, Vivien, tho' ye beat me like your
dog,

I too could die, as now I live, for thee.'

'Live on, Sir Boy,' she cried. 'I better prize
The living dog than the dead lion:
away!

I cannot brook to gaze upon the dead.'

Then leapt her palfrey o'er the fallen oak,

And bounding forward 'Leave them to the wolves.'

But when their foreheads felt the cooling air,
Balin first woke, and seeing that true face,

Familiar up from cradle-time, so wan,
Crawl'd slowly with low moans to to where he lay,

And on his dying brother cast himself

Dying; and *he* lifted faint eyes; he felt

One near him; all at once they found the world,

Staring wild-wide; then with a child-like wail,

And drawing down the dim disastrous brow

That o'er him hung, he kiss'd it, moan'd and spake;

'O Balin, Balin, I that fain had died

To save thy life, have brought thee to thy death.

Why had ye not the shield I knew? and why

Trampled ye thus on that which bare the Crown?'

Then Balin told him brokenly, and in gasps,

All that had chanced, and Balan moan'd again.

'Brother, I dwelt a day in Pellam's hall:

This Garlon mock'd me, but I heeded not.

And one said "Eat in peace! a liar is he,

And hates thee for the tribute!" this good knight

Told me, that twice a wanton damsel came,

And sought for Garlon at the castle-gates,

Whom Pellam drove away with holy heat.

I well believe this damsel, and the one

Who stood beside thee even now, the same.

"She dwells among the woods" he said "and meets

And dallies with him in the Mouth of Hell."

Foul are their lives; foul are their lips; they lied.

Pure as our own true Mother is our Queen.'

'O brother' answer'd Balin 'woe is me!

My madness all thy life has been thy doom,

Thy curse, and darken'd all thy day; and now

The night has come. I scarce can see thee now.

Goodnight! for we shall never bid again

Goodmorrow—Dark my doom was here, and dark

It will be there. I see thee now no more.

I would not mine again should darken thine,

Goodnight, true brother.'

Balan answer'd low
'Goodnight, true brother here! good-morrow there!

We two were born together, and we die

Together by one doom: and while he spoke

Closed his death-drowsing eyes, and slept the sleep

With Balin, either lock'd in either's arms.

MERLIN AND VIVIEN.

A STORM was coming, but the winds
 were still,
 And in the wild woods of Broce-
 liande,
 Before an oak, so hollow, huge and
 old
 It look'd a tower of ivied masonwork,
 At Merlin's feet the wily Vivien lay.

For he that always bare in bitter
 grudge
 The slights of Arthur and his Table,
 Mark
 The Cornish King, had heard a wan-
 dering voice,
 A minstrel of Caerleon by strong
 storm
 Blown into shelter at Tintagil, say
 That out of naked knightlike purity
 Sir Lancelot worshipt no unmarried
 girl
 But the great Queen herself, fought in
 her name,
 Sware by her—vows like theirs, that
 high in heaven
 Love most, but neither marry, nor are
 given
 In marriage, angels of our Lord's
 report.

He ceased, and then—for Vivien
 sweetly said
 (She sat beside the banquet nearest
 Mark),
 'And is the fair example follow'd,
 Sir,
 In Arthur's household?'—answer'd
 innocently :

'Ay, by some few—ay, truly—youths
 that hold
 It more beseems the perfect virgin
 knight
 To worship woman as true wife be-
 yond
 All hopes of gaining, than as maiden
 girl.
 They place their pride in Lancelot
 and the Queen.
 So passionate for an utter purity

Beyond the limit of their bond, are
 these,
 For Arthur bound them not to single-
 ness.

Brave hearts and clean! and yet—
 God guide them—young.'

Then Mark was half in heart to
 hurl his cup
 Straight at the speaker, but forebore :
 he rose
 To leave the hall, and, Vivien follow-
 ing him,
 Turn'd to her : 'Here are snakes with-
 in the grass ;
 And you methinks, O Vivien, save ye
 fear
 The monkish manhood, and the mask
 of pure
 Worn by this court, can stir them till
 they sting.'

And Vivien answer'd, smiling scorn-
 fully,
 'Why fear? because that foster'd at
 thy court
 I savor of thy—virtues? fear them?
 no.
 As Love, if Love be perfect, casts out
 fear,
 So Hate, if Hate be perfect, casts out
 fear.
 My father died in battle against the
 King,
 My mother on his corpse in open field ;
 She bore me there, for born from
 death was I
 Among the dead and sown upon the
 wind—
 And then on thee! and shown the
 truth betimes,
 That old true filth, and bottom of the
 well,
 Where Truth is hidden. Gracious
 lessons thine
 And maxims of the mud! "This
 Arthur pure!
 Great Nature thro' the flesh herself
 hath made
 Gives him the lie! There is no being
 pure,
 My cherub; saith not Holy Writ the
 same?"—

If I were Arthur, I would have thy
blood.
Thy blessing, stainless King! I bring
thee back,
When I have ferreted out their bur-
rowings,
The hearts of all this Order in mine
hand—
Ay—so that fate and craft and folly
close,
Perchance, one curl of Arthur's golden
beard.
To me this narrow grizzled fork of
thine
Is cleaner-fashion'd—Well, I loved
thee first,
That warps the wit.'

Loud laugh'd the graceless Mark.
But Vivien, into Camelot stealing,
lodged
Low in the city, and on a festal day
When Guinevere was crossing the
great hall
Cast herself down, knelt to the Queen,
and wail'd.

'Why kneel ye there? What evil
have ye wrought?
Rise!' and the damsel bidden rise
arose
And stood with folded hands and
downward eyes
Of glancing corner, and all meekly
said,
'None wrought, but suffer'd much, an
orphan maid!
My father died in battle for thy
King,
My mother on his corpse—in open
field,
The sad sea-sounding wastes of Lyo-
nesse—
Poor wretch—no friend!—and now
by Mark the King
For that small charm of feature mine,
pursued—
If any such be mine—I fly to thee.
Save, save me thou—Woman of
women—thine
The wreath of beauty, thine the crown
of power,

Be thine the balm of pity, O Heaven's
own white
Earth-angel, stainless bride of stain-
less King—
Help, for he follows! take me to thy-
self!
O yield me shelter for mine innocence
Among thy maidens!'

Here her slow sweet eyes
Fear-tremulous, but humbly hopeful,
rose
Fixt on her hearer's, while the Queen
who stood
All glittering like May sunshine on
May leaves
In green and gold, and plumed with
green replied,
'Peace, child! of overpraise and over-
blame
We choose the last. Our noble
Arthur, him
Ye scarce can overpraise, will hear
and know.
Nay—we believe all evil of thy
Mark—
Well, we shall test thee farther; but
this hour
We ride a-hawking with Sir Lancelot.
He hath given us a fair falcon which
he train'd;
We go to prove it. Bide ye here the
while.'

She past; and Vivien murmur'd
after 'Go!
I bide the while.' Then thro' the por-
tal-arch
Peering askance, and muttering broken-
wise,
As one that labors with an evil dream,
Beheld the Queen and Lancelot get to
horse.

'Is that the Lancelot? goodly—ay,
but gaunt:
Courteous—amends for gauntness—
takes her hand—
That glance of theirs, but for the
street, had been
A clinging kiss—how hand lingers in
hand!

Let go at last!—they ride away—to
hawk
For waterfowl. Royaller game is
mine.
For such a supersensual sensual bond
As that gray cricket chirpt of at our
hearth—
Touch flax with flame—a glance will
serve—the liars!
Ah little rat that bores in the dyke
Thy hole by night to let the boundless
deep
Down upon far-off cities while they
dance—
Or dream—of thee they dream'd not—
nor of me
These—ay, but each of either: ride,
and dream
The mortal dream that never yet was
mine—
Ride, ride and dream until ye wake—
to me!
Then, narrow court and lubber King,
farewell!
For Lancelot will be gracious to the
rat,
And our wise Queen, if knowing that
I know,
Will hate, loathe, fear—but honor me
the more.'

Yet while they rode together down
the plain,
Their talk was all of training, terms
of art,
Diet and seeling, jesses, leash and
lure.
'She is too noble' he said 'to check
at pies,
Nor will she rake: there is no base-
ness in her.'
Here when the Queen demanded as
by chance
'Know ye the stranger woman?'
'Let her be,'
Said Lancelot and unhooded casting
off
The goodly falcon free; she tower'd;
her bells,
Tone under tone, shrill'd, and they
lifted up
Their eager faces, wondering at the
strength,

Boldness and royal knighthood of the
bird
Who pounced her quarry and slew it.
Many a time
As once—of old—among the flowers—
they rode.

But Vivien half-forgotten of the
Queen
Among her damsels broidering sat,
heard, watch'd
And whisper'd: thro' the peaceful
court she crept
And whisper'd: then as Arthur in the
highest
Leaven'd the world, so Vivien in the
lowest,
Arriving at a time of golden rest,
And sowing one ill hint from ear to
ear,
While all the heathren lay at Arthur's
feet,
And no quest came, but all was joust
and play,
Leaven'd his hall. They heard and
let her be.

Thereafter as an enemy that has
left
Death in the living waters, and with-
drawn,
The wily Vivien stole from Arthur's
court.

She hated all the knights, and
heard in thought
Their lavish comment when her name
was named.
For once, when Arthur walking all
alone,
Vext at a rumor issued from her-
self
Of some corruption crept among his
knights,
Had met her, Vivien, being greeted
fair,
Would fain have wrought upon his
cloudy mood
With reverent eyes mock-loyal, shaken
voice,
And flutter'd adoration, and at last
With dark sweet hints of some who
prized him more

Than who should prize him most ; at
 which the King
 Had gazed upon her blankly and gone
 by :
 But one had watch'd, and had not held
 his peace :
 It made the laughter of an afternoon
 That Vivien should attempt the blame-
 less King.
 And after that, she set herself to gain
 Him, the most famous man of all those
 times,
 Merlin, who knew the range of all
 their arts,
 Had built the King his havens, ships,
 and halls,
 Was also Bard, and knew the starry
 heavens ;
 The people call'd him Wizard ; whom
 at first
 She play'd about with slight and
 sprightly talk,
 And vivid smiles, and faintly-venom'd
 points
 Of slander, glancing here and grazing
 there ;
 And yielding to his kindlier moods,
 the Seer
 Would watch her at her petulance, and
 play,
 Ev'n when they seem'd unloveable,
 and laugh
 As those that watch a kitten ; thus he
 grew
 Tolerant of what he half disdain'd,
 and she,
 Perceiving that she was but half dis-
 dain'd,
 Began to break her sports with graver
 fits,
 Turn red or pale, would often when
 they met
 Sigh fully, or all-silent gaze upon him
 With such a fixt devotion, that the old
 man,
 Tho' doubtful, felt the flattery, and at
 times
 Would flatter his own wish in age for
 love,
 And half believe her true : for thus at
 times
 He waver'd ; but that other clung to
 him,

Fixt in her will, and so the seasons
 went.

Then fell on Merlin a great melan-
 choly ;
 He walk'd with dreams and darkness,
 and he found
 A doom that ever poised itself to
 fall,
 An ever-moaning battle in the mist,
 World-war of dying flesh against the
 life,
 Death in all life and lying in all love,
 The meanest having power upon the
 highest,
 And the high purpose broken by the
 worm.

So leaving Arthur's court he gain'd
 the beach ;
 There found a little boat, and stept
 into it ;
 And Vivien follow'd, but he mark'd
 her not.
 She took the helm and he the sail ;
 the boat
 Drave with a sudden wind across the
 deeps,
 And touching Breton sands, they dis-
 embark'd.
 And then she follow'd Merlin all the
 way,
 Ev'n to the wild woods of Broceliande.
 For Merlin once had told her of a
 charm,
 The which if any wrought on anyone
 With woven paces and with waving
 arms,
 The man so wrought on ever seem'd
 to lie
 Closed in the four walls of a hollow
 tower,
 From which was no escape for ever-
 more ;
 And none could find that man for ever-
 more,
 Nor could he see but him who wrought
 the charm
 Coming and going, and he lay as dead
 And lost to life and use and name and
 fame.
 And Vivien ever sought to work the
 charm

Upon the great Enchanter of the
Time,
As fancying that her glory would be
great
According to his greatness whom she
quench'd.

There lay she all her length and
kiss'd his feet,
As if in deepest reverence and in love.
A twist of gold was round her hair; a
robe
Of samite without price, that more
exprest
Than hid her, clung about her lissome
limbs,
In color like the satin-shining palm
On shallows in the windy gleams of
March:
And while she kiss'd them, crying,
'Trample me,
Dear feet, that I have follow'd thro'
the world,
And I will pay you worship; tread me
down
And I will kiss you for it;' he was
mute:
So dark a forethought roll'd about his
brain,
As on a dull day in an Ocean cave
The blind wave feeling round his long
sea-hall
In silence: wherefore, when she lifted
up
A face of sad appeal, and spake and
said,
'O Merlin, do ye love me?' and again,
'O Merlin, do ye love me?' and once
more,
'Great Master, do ye love me?' he was
mute.
And lissome Vivien, holding by his
heel,
Writhed toward him, slid up his
knee and sat,
Behind his ankle twined her hollow
feet
Together, curved an arm about his
neck,
Clung like a snake; and letting her
left hand
Droop from his mighty shoulder, as a
leaf,

Made with her right a comb of pearl
to part
The lists of such a beard as youth gone
out
Had left in ashes: then he spoke and
said,
Not looking at her, 'Who are wise in
love
Love most, say least,' and Vivien an-
swer'd quick,
'I saw the little elf-god eyeless once
In Arthur's arras hall at Camelot:
But neither eyes nor tongue—O stupid
child!
Yet you are wise who say it; let me
think
Silence is wisdom: I am silent then,
And ask no kiss;' then adding all at
once,
'And lo, I clothe myself with wisdom,'
drew
The vast and shaggy mantle of his
beard
Across her neck and bosom to her
knee,
And call'd herself a gilded summer fly
Caught in a great old tyrant spider's
web,
Who meant to eat her up in that wild
wood
Without one word. So Vivien call'd
herself,
But rather seem'd a lovely baleful star
Veil'd in gray vapor; till he sadly
smiled:
'To what request for what strange
boon,' he said,
'Are these your pretty tricks and fool-
eries,
O Vivien, the preamble? yet my
thanks,
For these have broken up my melan-
choly.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling sau-
cily,
'What, O my Master, have ye found
your voice?
I bid the stranger welcome. Thanks
at last!
But yesterday you never open'd lip,
Except indeed to drink: no cup had
we:

In mine own lady palms I cull'd the
 spring
 That gather'd trickling dropwise from
 the cleft,
 And made a pretty cup of both my
 hands
 And offer'd you it kneeling : then you
 drank
 And knew no more, nor gave me one
 poor word ;
 O no more thanks than might a goat
 have given
 With no more sign of reverence than
 a beard.
 And when we halted at that other
 well,
 And I was faint to swooning, and you
 lay
 Foot-gilt with all the blossom-dust of
 those
 Deep meadows we had traversed, did
 you know
 That Vivien bathed your feet before
 her own ?
 And yet no thanks : and all thro' this
 wild wood
 And all this morning when I fondled
 you :
 Boon, ay, there was a boon, one not so
 strange—
 How had I wrong'd you ? surely ye
 are wise,
 But such a silence is more wise than
 kind.'

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers
 and said :
 'O did ye never lie upon the shore,
 And watch the curl'd white of the
 coming wave
 Glass'd in the slippery sand before it
 breaks ?
 Ev'n such a wave, but not so pleasur-
 able,
 Dark in the glass of some presageful
 mood,
 Had I for three days seen, ready to fall.
 And then I rose and fled from Arthur's
 court
 To break the mood. You follow'd
 me unask'd ;
 And when I look'd, and saw you
 following still.

My mind involved yourself the near-
 est thing
 In that mind-mist : for shall I tell you
 truth ?
 You seem'd that wave about to break
 upon me
 And sweep me from my hold upon the
 world,
 My use and name and fame. Your
 pardon, child.
 Your pretty sports have brighten'd all
 again.
 And ask your boon, for boon I owe
 you thrice,
 Once for wrong done you by confu-
 sion, next
 For thanks it seems till now neglected,
 last
 For these your dainty gambols :
 wherefore ask ;
 And take this boon so strange and
 not so strange.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling
 mournfully :
 'O not so strange as my long asking it,
 Not yet so strange as you yourself are
 strange,
 Nor half so strange as that dark mood
 of yours.
 I ever fear'd ye were not wholly mine ;
 And see, yourself have own'd ye did
 me wrong.
 The people call you prophet : let it be :
 But not of those that can expound
 themselves.
 Take Vivien for expounder ; she will
 call
 That three-days-long presageful gloom
 of yours
 No presage, but the same mistrustful
 mood
 That makes you seem less noble than
 yourself,
 Whenever I have ask'd this very boon,
 Now ask'd again : for see you not, dear
 love,
 That such a mood as that, which lately
 gloom'd
 Your fancy when ye saw me following
 you,
 Must make me fear still more you are
 not mine,



"I THY SHEPHERD PIPE."—Page 83.

Must make me yearn still more to
 prove you mine,
 And make me wish still more to learn
 this charm
 Of woven paces and of waving hands,
 As proof of trust. O Merlin, teach it
 me.
 The charm so taught will charm us
 both to rest.
 For, grant me some slight power upon
 your fate,
 I, feeling that you felt me worthy trust,
 Should rest and let you rest, knowing
 you mine.
 And therefore be as great as ye are
 named,
 Not muffled round with selfish reticence.
 How hard you look and how deny-
 ingly!
 O, if you think this wickedness in me,
 That I should prove it on you
 unawares,
 That makes me passing wrathful; then
 our bond
 Had best be loosed for ever: but
 think or not,
 By Heaven that hears I tell you the
 clean truth,
 As clean as blood of babes, as white
 as milk:
 O Merlin, may this earth, if ever I,
 If these unwitty wandering wits of
 mine,
 Ev'n in the jumbled rubbish of a
 dream,
 Have tript on such conjectural treach-
 ery—
 May this hard earth cleave to the
 Nadir hell
 Down, down, and close again, and nip
 me flat,
 If I be such a traitress. Yield my
 boon,
 Till which I scare can yield you all I
 am;
 And grant my re-reiterated wish,
 The great proof of your love: because
 I think,
 However wise, ye hardly know me yet.'

And Merlin loosed his hand from
 hers and said,

'I never was less wise, however wise,
 Too curious Vivien, tho' you talk of
 trust,
 Than when I told you first of such a
 charm.
 Yea, if ye talk of trust I tell you this,
 Too much I trusted when I told you
 that,
 And stirr'd this vice in you which
 ruin'd man
 Thro' woman the first hour; for how-
 soe'er
 In children a great curiousness be
 well,
 Who have to learn themselves and all
 the world,
 In you, that are no child, for still I
 find
 Your face is practised when I spell the
 lines,
 I call it,—well, I will not call it vice:
 But since you name yourself the sum-
 mer fly,
 I well could wish a cobweb for the
 gnat,
 That settles, beaten back, and beaten
 back
 Settles, till one could yield for wear-
 ness:
 But since I will not yield to give you
 power
 Upon my life and use and name and
 fame,
 Why will ye never ask some other
 boon?
 Yea, by God's rood, I trusted you too
 much.'

And Vivien, like the tenderest-
 hearted maid
 That ever bided tryst at village stile,
 Made answer, either eyelid wet with
 tears:
 'Nay, Master, be not wrathful with
 your maid;
 Caress her: let her feel herself for-
 given
 Who feels no heart to ask another
 boon.
 I think ye hardly know the tender
 rhyme
 Of "trust me not at all or all in
 all."

I heard the great Sir Lancelot sing it
 once,
 And it shall answer for me. Listen
 to it.

“In Love, if Love be Love, if Love
 be ours,
 Faith and unfaith can ne’er be equal
 powers:
 Unfaith in aught is want of faith in
 all:

“It is the little rift within the lute,
 That by and by will make the music
 mute,
 And ever widening slowly silence all.

“The little rift within the lover’s
 lute
 Or little pitted speck in garner’d fruit,
 That rotting inward slowly moulders
 all.

“It is not worth the keeping: let it
 go:
 But shall it? answer, darling, answer,
 no.
 And trust me not at all or all in all.”

O Master, do ye love my tender
 rhyme?’

And Merlin look’d and half believed
 her true,
 So tender was her voice, so fair her
 face,
 So sweetly gleam’d her eyes behind
 her tears
 Like sunlight on the plain behind a
 shower:
 And yet he answer’d half indignantly:

‘Far other was the song that once I
 heard
 By this huge oak, sung nearly where
 we sit:
 For here we met, some ten or twelve
 of us,
 To chase a creature that was current
 then
 In these wild woods, the hart with
 golden horns.

It was the time when first the question
 rose
 About the founding of a Table Round,
 That was to be, for love of God and
 men
 And noble deeds, the flower of all the
 world.
 And each incited each to noble
 deeds.
 And while we waited, one, the young-
 est of us,
 We could not keep him silent, out he
 flash’d,
 And into such a song, such fire for
 fame,
 Such trumpet-blowings in it, coming
 down
 To such a stern and iron-clashing
 close,
 That when he stopt we long’d to hurl
 together,
 And should have done it; but the
 beauteous beast
 Scared by the noise upstarted at our
 feet,
 And like a silver shadow slipt away
 Thro’ the dim land; and all day long
 we rode
 Thro’ the dim land against a rushing
 wind,
 That glorious roundel echoing in our
 ears,
 And chased the flashes of his golden
 horns
 Until they vanish’d by the fairy well
 That laughs at iron—as our warriors
 did—
 Where children cast their pins and
 nails, and cry,
 “Laugh, little well!” but touch it
 with a sword,
 It buzzes fiercely round the point, and
 there
 We lost him: such a noble song was
 that.
 But, Vivien, when you sang me that
 sweet rhyme,
 I felt as tho’ you knew this cursed
 charm,
 Were proving it on me, and that I
 lay
 And felt them slowly ebbing, name
 and fame.’

And Vivien answer'd smiling
mournfully:
'O mine have ebb'd away for ever-
more,
And all thro' following you to this
wild wood,
Because I saw you sad, to comfort
you.
Lo now, what hearts have men! they
never mount
As high as woman in her selfless
mood.
And touching fame, howe'er ye scorn
my song,
Take one verse more—the lady speaks
it—this:

"My name, once mine, now thine,
is closelier mine,
For fame, could fame be mine, that
fame were thine,
And shame, could shame be thine,
that shame were mine.
So trust me not at all or all in all."

'Says she not well? and there is
more—this rhyme
Is like the fair pearl-necklace of the
Queen,
That burst in dancing, and the pearls
were spilt;
Some lost, some stolen, some as
relics kept.
But nevermore the same two sister
pearls
Ran down the silken thread to kiss
each other
On her white neck—so is it with this
rhyme:
It lives dispersedly in many hands,
And every minstrel sings it differ-
ently:
Yet is there one true line, the pearl
of pearls:
"Man dreams of Fame while woman
wakes to love."
Yea! Love, tho' Love were of the
grossest, carves
A portion from the solid present, eats
And uses, careless of the rest; but
Fame,
The Fame that follows death is
nothing to us;

And what is Fame in life but half-
disfame,
And counterchanged with darkness?
ye yourself
Know well that Envy calls you Devil's
son,
And since ye seem the Master of all
Art,
They fain would make you Master of
all vice.'

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers
and said,
'I once was looking for a magic
weed,
And found a fair young squire who
sat alone,
Had carved himself a knightly shield
of wood,
And then was painting on it fancied
arms,
Azure, an Eagle rising or, the Sun
In dexter chief; the scroll "I follow
fame."
And speaking not, but leaning over
him,
I took his brush and blotted out the
bird,
And made a Gardener putting in a
graff,
With this for motto, "Rather use
than fame."
You should have seen him blush;
but afterwards
He made a stalwart knight. O Viv-
ien,
For you, methinks you think you love
me well;
For me, I love you somewhat; rest:
and Love
Should have some rest and pleasure
in himself,
Not ever be too curious for a boon,
Too prurient for a proof against the
grain
Of him ye say ye love: but Fame
with men,
Being but ampler means to serve man-
kind,
Should have small rest or pleasure in
herself,
But work as vassal to the larger
love,

That dwarfs the petty love of one to one.
 Use gave me Fame at first, and Fame again
 Increasing gave me use. Lo, there my boon!
 What other? for men sought to prove me vile,
 Because I fain had given them greater wits:
 And then did Envy call me Devil's son:
 The sick weak beast seeking to help herself
 By striking at her better, miss'd, and brought
 Her own claw back, and wounded her own heart.
 Sweet were the days when I was all unknown,
 But when my name was lifted up, the storm
 Brake on the mountain and I cared not for it.
 Right well know I that Fame is half-disfame,
 Yet needs must work my work. That other fame,
 To one at least, who hath not children, vague,
 The cackle of the unborn about the grave,
 I cared not for it: a single misty star,
 Which is the second in a line of stars
 That seem a sword beneath a belt of three,
 I never gazed upon it but I dreamt
 Of some vast charm concluded in that star
 To make fame nothing. Wherefore, if I fear,
 Giving you power upon me thro' this charm,
 That you might play me falsely, having power,
 However well ye think ye love me now
 (As sons of kings loving in pupilage
 Have turn'd to tyrants when they came to power)
 I rather dread the loss of use than fame;

If you—and not so much from wickedness,
 As some wild turn of anger, or a mood
 Of overstrain'd affection, it may be,
 To keep me all to your own self,—or else
 A sudden spurt of woman's jealousy,—
 Should try this charm on whom ye say ye love.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling as in wrath:
 'Have I not sworn? I am not trusted. Good!
 Well, hide it, hide it; I shall find it out;
 And being found take heed of Vivien. A woman and not trusted, doubtless I
 Might feel some sudden turn of anger born
 Of your misfaith; and your fine epithet
 Is accurate too, for this full love of mine
 Without the full heart back may merit well
 Your term of overstrain'd. So used as I,
 My daily wonder is, I love at all.
 And as to woman's jealousy, O why not?
 O to what end, except a jealous one,
 And one to make me jealous if I love,
 Was this fair charm invented by yourself?
 I well believe that all about this world
 Ye cage a buxom captive here and there,
 Closed in the four walls of a hollow tower
 From which is no escape for evermore.'

Then the great Master merrily answer'd her:
 'Full many a love in loving youth was mine;
 I needed then no charm to keep them mine

But youth and love; and that full
heart of yours
Whereof ye prattle, may now assure
you mine;
So live uncharm'd. For those who
wrought it first,
The wrist is parted from the hand that
waved,
The feet unmortised from their ankle-
bones
Who paced it, ages back: but will ye
hear
The legend as in guerdon for your
rhyme?

'There lived a king in the most
Eastern East,
Less old than I, yet older, for my
blood
Hath earnest in it of far springs to be.
A tawny pirate anchor'd in his port,
Whose bark had plunder'd twenty
nameless isles;
And passing one, at the high peep of
dawn,
He saw two cities in a thousand
boats
All fighting for a woman on the sea.
And pushing his black craft among
them all,
He lightly scatter'd theirs and brought
her off,
With loss of half his people arrow-
slain;
A maid so smooth, so white, so won-
derful,
They said a light came from her when
she moved:
And since the pirate would not yield
her up,
The King impaled him for his piracy;
Then made her Queen: but those
isle-nurtured eyes
Waged such unwilling tho' successful
war
On all the youth, they sicken'd; coun-
cils thinn'd,
And armies waned, for magnet-like
she drew
The rustiest iron of old fighters'
hearts;
And 'beasts themselves would wor-
ship; camels knelt

Unbidden, and the brutes of mountain
back
That carry kings in castles, bow'd
black knees
Of homage, ringing with their serpent
hands,
To make her smile, her golden ankle-
bells.
What wonder, being jealous, that he
sent
His horns of proclamation out thro'
all
The hundred under-kingdoms that he
sway'd
To find a wizard who might teach the
King
Some charm, which being wrought
upon the Queen
Might keep her all his own: to such a
one
He promised more than ever king has
given,
A league of mountain full of golden
mines,
A province with a hundred miles of
coast,
A palace and a princess, all for him:
But on all those who tried and fail'd,
the King
Pronounced a dismal sentence, mean-
ing by it
To keep the list low and pretenders
back,
Or like a king, not to be trifled with—
Their heads should moulder on the
city gates.
And many tried and fail'd, because
the charm
Of nature in her overbore their own:
And many a wizard brow bleach'd on
the walls:
And many weeks a troop of carrion
crows
Hung like a cloud above the gateway
towers.'

And Vivien breaking in upon him-
said:
'I sit and gather honey; yet, me,
thinks,
Thy tongue has tript a little: ask thy-
self.
The lady never made *unwilling* war

With those fine eyes: she had her
 pleasure in it,
 And made her good man jealous with
 good cause.
 And lived there neither dame nor
 damsel then
 Wroth at a lover's loss? were all
 as tame,
 I mean, as noble, as their Queen was
 fair?
 Not one to flirt a venom at her eyes,
 Or pinch a murderous dust into her
 drink,
 Or make her paler with a poison'd
 rose?
 Well, those were not our days: but
 did they find
 A wizard? Tell me, was he like to
 thee?'

She ceased, and made her lithe arm
 round his neck
 Tighten, and then drew back, and let
 her eyes
 Speak for her, glowing on him, like a
 bride's
 On her new lord, her own, the first of
 men.

He answer'd laughing, 'Nay, not
 like to me.
 At last they found—his foragers for
 charms—
 A little glassy-headed hairless man,
 Who lived alone in a great wild on
 grass;
 Read but one book, and ever reading
 grew
 So grated down and filed away with
 thought,
 So lean his eyes were monstrous;
 while the skin
 Clung but to crate and basket, ribs
 and spine.
 And since he kept his mind on one
 sole aim,
 Nor ever touch'd fierce wine, nor
 tasted flesh,
 Nor own'd a sensual wish, to him the
 wall
 That sunders ghosts and shadow-
 casting men

Became a crystal, and he saw them
 thro' it,
 And heard their voices talk behind
 the wall,
 And learnt their elemental secrets,
 powers
 And forces; often o'er the sun's bright
 eye
 Drew the vast eyelid of an inky
 cloud,
 And lash'd it at the base with slanting
 storm;
 Or in the noon of mist and driving
 rain,
 When the lake whiten'd and the pine-
 wood roar'd,
 And the cairn'd mountain was a
 shadow, sunn'd
 The world to peace again: here was
 the man,
 And so by force they dragg'd him to
 the King.
 And then he taught the King to charm
 the Queen
 In such-wise, that no man could see
 her more,
 Nor saw she save the King, who
 wrought the charm,
 Coming and going, and she lay as
 dead,
 And lost all use of life: but when the
 King
 Made proffer of the league of golden
 mines,
 The province with a hundred miles of
 coast,
 The palace and the princess, that old
 man
 Went back to his old wild, and lived
 on grass,
 And vanished, and his book came
 down to me.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling
 saucily:
 'Ye have the book: the charm is
 written in it:
 Good: take my counsel: let me know
 it at once:
 For keep it like a puzzle chest in
 chest,
 With each chest lock'd and padlock'd
 thirty-fold,

And whelm all this beneath as vast a mound
 As after a furious battle turfs the slain
 On some wild down above the windy deep,
 I yet should strike upon a sudden means
 To dig, pick, open, find and read the charm:
 Then, if I tried it, who should blame me then?’

And smiling as a master smiles at one
 That is not of his school, nor any school
 But that where blind and naked Ignorance
 Delivers brawling judgments, unashamed,
 On all things all day long, he answer’d her:

‘Thou read the book, my pretty Vivien!
 O ay, it is but twenty pages long,
 But every page having an ample marge,
 And every marge enclosing in the midst
 A square of text that looks a little blot,
 The text no larger than the limbs of fleas;
 And every square of text an awful charm,
 Writ in a language that has long gone by.
 So long, that mountains have arisen since
 With cities on their flanks—thou read the book!
 And every margin scribbled, crost, and cramm’d
 With comment, densest condensation, hard
 To mind and eye; but the long sleepless nights
 Of my long life have made it easy to me.
 And none can read the text, not even I;

And none can read the comment but myself;
 And in the comment did I find the charm.
 O, the results are simple; a mere child
 Might use it to the harm of anyone,
 And never could undo it: ask no more:
 For tho’ you should not prove it upon me,
 But keep that oath ye sware, ye might, perchance,
 Assay it on some one of the Table Round,
 And all because ye dream they babble of you.’

And Vivien, frowning in true anger, said:
 ‘What dare the full-fed liars say of me?
They ride abroad redressing human wrongs!
 They sit with knife in meat and wine in horn!
They bound to holy vows of chastity!
 Were I not woman, I could tell a tale.
 But you are man, you well can understand
 The shame that cannot be explain’d for shame.
 Not one of all the drove should touch me: swine!’

Then answer’d Merlin careless of her words:
 ‘You breathe but accusation vast and vague,
 Spleen-born, I think, and proofless. If ye know,
 Set up the charge ye know, to stand or fall!’

And Vivien answer’d frowning wrathfully:
 ‘O ay, what say ye to Sir Valence, him
 Whose kinsman left him watcher o’er his wife
 And two fair babes, and went to distant lands;
 Was one year gone, and on returning found
 Not two but three? there lay the reckling, one

But one hour old! What said the
happy sire?
A seven-months' babe had been a truer
gift.
Those twelve sweet moons confused
his fatherhood.'

Then answer'd Merlin, 'Nay, I
know the tale.
Sir Valence wedded with an outland
dame:
Some cause had kept him sunder'd
from his wife.
One child they had: it lived with her:
she died:
His kinsman travelling on his own
affair
Was charged by Valence to bring
home the child.
He brought, not found it therefore:
take the truth.'

'O ay,' said Vivien, 'overtrue a tale.
What say ye then to sweet Sir Sagra-
more,
That ardent man? "to pluck the
flower in season,"
So says the song, "I trow it is no trea-
son."
O Master, shall we call him overquick
To crop his own sweet rose before the
hour?'

And Merlin answer'd, 'Overquick
art thou
To catch a loathly plume fall'n from
the wing
Of that foul bird of rapine whose whole
prey
Is man's good name: he never wrong'd
his bride.
I know the tale. An angry gust of
wind
Puff'd out his torch among the myriad-
room'd
And many-corridor'd complexities
Of Arthur's palace: then he found a
door,
And darkling felt the sculptured orna-
ment
That wreathen round it made it seem
his own;

And wearied out made for the couch
and slept,
A stainless man beside a stainless
maid;
And either slept, nor knew of other
there;
Till the high dawn piercing the royal
rose
In Arthur's casement glimmer'd
chastely down,
Blushing upon them blushing, and at
once
He rose without a word and parted
from her:
But when the thing was blazed about
the court,
The brute world howling forced them
into bonds,
And as it chanced they are happy, be-
ing pure.'

'O ay,' said Vivien, 'that were likely
too.
What say ye then to fair Sir Percivale
And of the horrid foulness that he
wrought,
The saintly youth, the spotless lamb
of Christ,
Or some black wether of St. Satan's
fold.
What, in the precincts of the chapel-
yard,
Among the knightly brasses of the
graves,
And by the cold Hic Jacets of the
dead!'

And Merlin answer'd careless of her
charge,
'A sober man is Percivale and pure;
But once in life was fluster'd with new
wine,
Then paced for coolness in the chapel-
yard;
Where one of Satan's shepherdesses
caught
And meant to stamp him with her
master's mark;
And that he sinned is not believable;
For, look upon his face!—but if he
sinn'd,
The sin that practice burns into the
blood,

And not the one dark hour which
brings remorse,
Will brand us, after, of whose fold we
be :
Or else were he, the holy king, whose
hymns
Are chanted in the minster, worse than
all.
But is your spleen froth'd out, or have
ye more ?'

And Vivien answer'd frowning yet
in wrath :
'O ay ; what say ye to Sir Lancelot,
friend
Traitor or true ? that commerce with
the Queen,
I ask you, is it clamor'd by the child,
Or whisper'd in the corner do ye
know it ?'

To which he answer'd sadly, 'yea, I
know it.
Sir Lancelot went ambassador, at first,
To fetch her, and she watch'd him from
her walls.
A rumor runs, she took him for the
King,
So fixt her fancy on him : let them be.
But have ye no one word of loyal
praise
For Arthur, blameless King and stain-
less man ?'

She answer'd with a low and chuck-
ling laugh :
'Man ! is he man at all, who knows
and winks ?
Sees what his fair bride is and does,
and winks ?
By which the good King means to
blind himself,
And blinds himself and all the Table
Round
To all the foulness that they work.
Myself
Could call him (were it not for woman-
hood)
The pretty, popular name such man-
hood earns,
Could call him the main cause of all
their crime ;

Yea, were he not crown'd King,
coward, and fool.'

Then Merlin to his own heart, loath-
ing, said :
'O true and tender ! O my liege and
King !
O selfless man and stainless gentle-
man,
Who wouldst against thine own eye-
witness fain
Have all men true and leal, all women
pure ;
How, in the mouths of base interpre-
ters,
From over-fineness not intelligible
To things with every sense as false and
foul
As the poach'd filth that floods the
middle street,
Is thy white blamelessness accounted
blame !'

But Vivien, deeming Merlin over-
borne
By instance, recommenced, and let her
tongue
Rage like a fire among the noblest
names,
Polluting, and imputing her whole self,
Defaming and defacing, till she left
Not even Lancelot brave, nor Gala-
had clean.

Her words had issue other than she
will'd.
He dragg'd his eyebrow bushes down,
and made
A snowy penthouse for his hollow
eyes,
And mutter'd in himself, 'Tell *her* the
charm !
So, if she had it, would she rail on me
To snare the next, and if she have it
not
So will she rail. What did the wan-
ton say ?
'Not mount as high ;' we scarce can
sink as low :
For men at most differ as Heaven and
earth,
But women, worst and best, as Heaven
and Hell.

I know the Table Round, my friends
 of old;
 All brave, and many generous, and
 some chaste.
 She cloaks the scar of some repulse
 with lies;
 I well believe she tempted them and
 fail'd,
 Being so bitter: for fine plots may fail,
 Tho' harlots paint their talk as well
 as face
 With colors of the heart that are not
 theirs.
 I will not let her know: nine tithes
 of times
 Face-flatterer and backbiter are the
 same.
 And they, sweet soul, that most im-
 pute a crime
 Are pronest to it, and impute them-
 selves,
 Wanting the mental range; or low
 desire
 Not to feel lowest makes them level
 all;
 Yea, they would pare the mountain to
 the plain,
 To leave an equal baseness; and in
 this
 Are harlots like the crowd, that if
 they find
 Some stain or blemish in a name of
 note,
 Not grieving that their greatest are so
 small,
 Inflate themselves with some insane
 delight,
 And judge all nature from her feet of
 clay,
 Without the will to lift their eyes, and
 see
 Her godlike head crown'd with spir-
 itual fire,
 And touching other worlds. I am
 weary of her.'

He spoke in words part heard, in
 whispers part,
 Half-suffocated in the hoary fell
 And many-winter'd fleece of throat
 and chin.
 But Vivien, gathering somewhat of
 his mood,

And hearing 'harlot' mutter'd twice
 or thrice,
 Leapt from her session on his lap, and
 stood
 Stiff as a viper frozen; loathsome
 sight,
 How from the rosy lips of life and
 love,
 Flash'd the bare-grinning skeleton of
 death!
 White was her cheek; sharp breaths
 of anger puff'd
 Her fairy nostril out; her hand half-
 clench'd
 Went faltering sideways downward to
 her belt,
 And feeling; had she found a dagger
 there
 (For in a wink the false love turns to
 hate)
 She would have stabb'd him; but she
 found it not:
 His eye was calm, and suddenly she
 took
 To bitter weeping like a beaten child,
 A long, long weeping, not consolable.
 Then her false voice made way,
 broken with sobs:

'O crueller than was ever told in
 tale,
 Or sung in song! O vainly lavish'd
 love!
 O cruel, there was nothing wild or
 strange,
 Or seeming shameful—for what shame
 in love,
 So love be true, and not as yours is—
 nothing
 Poor Vivien had not done to win his
 trust
 Who call'd her what he call'd her—
 all her crime,
 All—all—the wish to prove him
 wholly hers.'

She mused a little, and then clapt
 her hands
 Together with a wailing shriek, and
 said:
 'Stabb'd through the heart's affec-
 tions to the heart!

Seethed like the kid in its own mother's milk !
 Kill'd with a word worse than a life of blows !
 I thought that he was gentle, being great :
 O God, that I had loved a smaller man !
 I should have found in him a greater heart.
 O, I, that flattering my true passion, saw
 The knights, the court, the King, dark in your light,
 Who loved to make men darker than they are,
 Because of that high pleasure which I had
 To seat you sole upon my pedestal
 Of worship—I am answer'd, and henceforth
 The course of life that seem'd so flowery to me
 With you for guide and master, only you,
 Becomes the sea-cliff pathway broken short,
 And ending in a ruin—nothing left,
 But into some low cave to crawl, and there;
 If the wolf spare me, weep my life away,
 Kill'd with inutterable unkindliness.'

She paused, she turn'd away, she hung her head,
 The snake of gold slid from her hair, the braid
 Slipt and uncoil'd itself, she wept afresh,
 And the dark wood grew darker toward the storm
 In silence, while his anger slowly died
 Within him, till he let his wisdom go
 For ease of heart, and half believed her true :
 Call'd her to shelter in the hollow oak,
 'Come from the storm,' and having no reply,
 Gazed at the heaving shoulder, and the face
 Hand-hidden, as for utmost grief or shame ;

Then thrice essay'd, by tenderest-touching terms,
 To sleek her ruffled peace of mind, in vain.
 At last she let herself be conquer'd by him,
 And as the cageling newly flown returns,
 The seeming-injured simple-hearted thing
 Came to her old perch back, and settled there.
 There while she sat, half-falling from his knees,
 Half-nestled at his heart, and since he saw
 The slow tear creep from her closed eyelid yet,
 About her, more in kindness than in love,
 The gentle wizard cast a shielding arm.
 But she dislink'd herself at once and rose,
 Her arms upon her breast across, and stood,
 A virtuous gentlewoman deeply wrong'd,
 Upright and flush'd before him : then she said :

'There must be now no passages of love
 Betwixt us twain henceforward evermore ;
 Since, if I be what I am grossly call'd,
 What should be granted which your own gross heart
 Would reckon worth the taking? I will go.
 In truth, but one thing now—better have died
 Thrice than have ask'd it once—could make me stay—
 That proof of trust—so often ask'd in vain !
 How justly, after that vile term of yours,
 I find with grief! I might believe you then,
 Who knows? once more. Lo! what was once to me

Mere matter of the fancy, now hath
 grown
 The vast necessity of heart and life.
 Farewell; think gently of me, for I
 fear
 My fate or folly, passing gayer youth
 For one so old, must be to love thee
 still.
 But ere I leave thee let me swear once
 more
 That if I schemed against thy peace
 in this,
 May yon just heaven, that darkens
 o'er me, send
 One flash, that, missing all things else,
 may make
 My scheming brain a cinder, if I lie.

Scarce had she ceased, when out of
 heaven a bolt
 (For now the storm was close above
 them) struck,
 Furrowing a giant oak, and javelining
 With darted spikes and splinters of
 the wood
 The dark earth round. He raised his
 eyes and saw
 The tree that shone white-listed thro'
 the gloom.
 But Vivien, fearing heaven had heard
 her oath,
 And dazzled by the livid-flickering
 fork,
 And deafen'd with the stammering
 cracks and claps
 That follow'd, flying back and crying
 out,
 'O Merlin, tho' you do not love me,
 save,
 Yet save me!' clung to him and
 hugg'd him close;
 And call'd him dear protector in her
 fright,
 Nor yet forgot her practice in her
 fright,
 But wrought upon his mood and
 hugg'd him close.
 The pale blood of the wizard at her
 touch
 Took gayer colors, like an opal
 warm'd.
 She blamed herself for telling hearsay
 tales:

She shook from fear, and for her fault
 she wept
 Of petulancy; she call'd him lord and
 liege,
 Her seer, her bard, her silver star of
 eve,
 Her God, her Merlin, the one passion-
 ate love
 Of her whole life; and ever overhead
 Bellow'd the tempest, and the rotten
 branch
 Snapt in the rushing of the river-rain
 Above them; and in change of glare
 and gloom
 Her eyes and neck glittering went and
 came;
 Till now the storm, its burst of passion
 spent,
 Moaning and calling out of other
 lands,
 Had left the ravaged woodland yet
 once more
 To peace; and what should not have
 been had been,
 For Merlin, overtalk'd and overworn,
 Had yielded, told her all the charm,
 and slept.

Then, in one moment, she put forth
 the charm
 Of woven paces and of waving hands,
 And in the hollow oak he lay as dead,
 And lost to life and use and name and
 fame.

Then crying 'I have made his glory
 mine,'
 And shrieking out 'O fool!' the har-
 lot leapt
 Adown the forest, and the thicket
 closed
 Behind her, and the forest echo'd
 'fool.'

LANCELOT AND ELAINE.

ELAINE the fair, Elaine the loveable,
 Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,
 High in her chamber up a tower to
 the east
 Guarded the sacred shield of Lancelot;

Which first she placed where morn-
 ing's earliest ray
 Might strike it, and awake her with
 the gleam;
 Then fearing rust or soilure fashion'd
 for it
 A case of silk, and braided there-
 upon
 All the devices blazon'd on the shield
 In their own tinct, and added, of her
 wit,
 A border fantasy of branch and flower,
 And yellow-throated nestling in the
 nest,
 Nor rested thus content, but day by
 day,
 Leaving her household and good
 father, climb'd
 That eastern tower, and entering
 barr'd her door,
 Stript off the case, and read the naked
 shield,
 Now guess'd a hidden meaning in his
 arms,
 Now made a pretty history to herself
 Of every dint a sword had beaten in
 it,
 And every scratch a lance had made
 upon it,
 Conjecturing when and where: this
 cut is fresh;
 That ten years back; this dealt him at
 Caerlyle;
 That at Caerleon; this at Camelot:
 And ah God's mercy, what a stroke
 was there!
 And here a thrust that might have
 kill'd, but God
 Broke the strong lance, and roll'd his
 enemy down,
 And saved him: so she lived in fan-
 tasy.

How came the lily maid by that
 good shield
 Of Lancelot, she that knew not ev'n
 his name?
 He left it with her, when he rode to
 tilt
 For the great diamond in the diamond
 jousts,
 Which Arthur had ordain'd, and by
 that name

Had named them, since a diamond
 was the prize.

For Arthur, long before they
 crown'd him King,
 Roving the trackless realms of Lyon-
 nesse,
 Had found a glen, gray boulder and
 black tarn.
 A horror lived about the tarn, and
 clave
 Like its own mists to all the mountain
 side:
 For here two brothers, one a king,
 had met
 And fought together; but their names
 were lost;
 And each had slain his brother at a
 blow;
 And down they fell and made the glen
 abhorr'd:
 And there they lay till all their bones
 were bleach'd,
 And lichen'd into color with the
 crags:
 And he, that once was king, had on a
 crown
 Of diamonds, one in front, and four
 aside.
 And Arthur came, and laboring up
 the pass,
 All in a misty moonshine, unawares
 Had trodden that crown'd skeleton,
 and the skull
 Brake from the nape, and from the
 skull the crown
 Roll'd into light, and turning on its
 rims
 Fled like a glittering rivulet to the
 tarn:
 And down the shingly scaur he
 plunged, and caught,
 And set it on his head, and in his
 heart
 Heard murmurs, 'Lo, thou likewise
 shalt be King.'

Thereafter, when a King, he had
 the gems
 Pluck'd from the crown, and show'd
 them to his knights,
 Saying, 'These jewels, whereupon I
 chanced

Divinely, are the kingdom's, not the
 King's—
 For public use: henceforward let
 there be,
 Once every year, a joust for one of
 these:
 For so by nine years' proof we needs
 must learn
 Which is our mightiest, and ourselves
 shall grow
 In use of arms and manhood, till we
 drive
 The heathen, who, some say, shall
 rule the land
 Hereafter, which God hinder.' Thus
 he spoke:
 And eight years past, eight jousts had
 been, and still
 Had Lancelot won the diamond of
 the year,
 With purpose to present them to the
 Queen,
 When all were won; but meaning all
 at once
 To snare her royal fancy with a
 boon
 Worth half her realm, had never
 spoken word.

Now for the central diamond and
 the last
 And largest, Arthur, holding then his
 court
 Hard on the river nigh the place
 which now
 Is this world's hugest, let proclaim a
 joust
 At Camelot, and when the time drew
 nigh
 Spake (for she had been sick) to
 Guinevere,
 'Are you so sick, my Queen, you can-
 not move
 To these fair jousts?' 'Yea, lord,'
 she said, 'ye know it.'
 'Then will ye miss,' he answer'd,
 'the great deeds
 Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the
 lists,
 A sight ye love to look on.' And the
 Queen
 Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt
 languidly

On Lancelot, where he stood beside
 the King.
 He thinking that he read her meaning
 there,
 'Stay with me, I am sick; my love is
 more
 Than many diamonds,' yielded; and
 a heart
 Love-loyal to the least wish of the
 Queen
 (However much he yearn'd to make
 complete
 The tale of diamonds for his destined
 boon)
 Urged him to speak against the truth,
 and say,
 'Sir King, mine ancient wound is
 hardly whole,
 And lets me from the saddle;' and
 the King
 Glanced first at him, then her, and
 went his way.
 No sooner gone than suddenly she
 began:

'To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot,
 much to blame!
 Why go ye not to these fair jousts?
 the knights
 Are half of them our enemies, and
 the crowd
 Will murmur, "Lo the shameless
 ones, who take
 Their pastime now the trustful King
 is gone!"'
 Then Lancelot vext at having lied in
 vain:
 'Are ye so wise? ye were not once so
 wise,
 My Queen, that summer, when ye
 loved me first.
 Then of the crowd ye took no more
 account
 Than of the myriad cricket of the
 mead,
 When its own voice clings to each
 blade of grass,
 And every voice is nothing. As to
 knights,
 Them surely can I silence with all ease.
 But now my loyal worship is allow'd
 Of all men: many a bard, without
 offence,

Has link'd our names together in his
lay,
Lancelot, the flower of bravery,
Guinevere,
The pearl of beauty: and our knights
at feast
Have pledged us in this union, while
the King
Would listen smiling. How then?
is there more?
Has Arthur spoken aught? or would
yourself,
Now weary of my service and devoir,
Henceforth be truer to your faultless
lord?'

She broke into a little scornful
laugh:
'Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the fault-
less King,
That passionate perfection, my good
lord—
But who can gaze upon the Sun in
heaven?
He never spake word of reproach to
me,
He never had a glimpse of mine
untruth,
He cares not for me: only here
to-day
There gleam'd a vague suspicion in
his eyes:
Some meddling rogue has tamper'd
with him—else
Rapt in this fancy of his Table
Round,
And swearing men to vows impossi-
ble,
To make them like himself: but,
friend, to me
He is all fault who hath no fault at all:
For who loves me must have a touch
of earth;
The low sun makes the color: I am
yours,
Not Arthur's, as ye know, save by the
bond.
And therefore hear my words: go to
the jousts:
The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break
our dream
When sweetest; and the vermin
voices here

May buzz so loud—we scorn them,
but they sting.'

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief
of knights:
'And with what face, after my pretext
made,
Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot, I
Before a King who honors his own
word,
As if it were his God's?'

'Yea,' said the Queen,
'A moral child without the craft to
rule,
Else had he not lost me: but listen to
me,
If I must find you wit: we hear it
said
That men go down before your spear
at a touch,
But knowing you are Lancelot; your
great name,
This conquers: hide it therefore; go
unknown:
Win! by this kiss you will: and our
true King
Will then allow your pretext, O my
knight,
As all for glory; for to speak him
true,
Ye know right well, how meek soe'er
he seem,
No keener hunter after glory breathes.
He loves it in his knights more than
himself:
They prove to him his work: win and
return.'

Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to
horse,
Wroth at himself. Not willing to be
known,
He left the barren-beaten thorough-
fare,
Chose the green path that show'd the
rarer foot,
And there among the solitary downs,
Full often lost in fancy, lost his way;
Till as he traced a faintly-shadow'd
track,
That all in loops and links among the
dales

Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw
 Fired from the west, far on a hill, the
 towers.
 Thither he made, and blew the gate-
 way horn.
 Then came an old, dumb, myriad-
 wrinkled man,
 Who let him into lodging and dis-
 arm'd.
 And Lancelot marvell'd at the word-
 less man;
 And issuing found the Lord of Astolat
 With two strong sons, Sir Torre and
 Sir Lavaine,
 Moving to meet him in the castle
 court;
 And elose behind them stept the lily
 maid
 Elaine, his daughter: mother of the
 house
 There was not: some light jest
 among them rose
 With laughter dying down as the
 great knight
 Approach'd them: then the Lord of
 Astolat:
 'Whence comest thou, my guest, and
 by what name
 Livest between the lips? for by thy
 state
 And presence I might guess thee
 chief of those,
 After the King, who eat in Arthur's
 halls.
 Him have I seen: the rest, his Table
 Round,
 Known as they are, to me they are
 unknown.'

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief
 of knights:
 Known am I, and of Arthur's hall,
 and known,
 What I by mere mischance have
 brought, my shield.
 But since I go to joust as one un-
 known
 At Camelot for the diamond, ask me
 not,
 Hereafter ye shall know me—and the
 shield—
 I pray you lend me one, if such you
 have,

Blank, or at least with some device
 not mine.'

Then said the Lord of Astolat,
 'Here is Torre's:
 Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir
 Torre.
 And so, God wot, his shield is blank
 enough.
 His ye can have.' Then added plain
 Sir Torre,
 'Yea, since I cannot use it, ye may
 have it.'
 Here laugh'd the father saying, 'Fie,
 Sir Churl,
 Is that an answer for a noble knight?
 Allow him! but Lavaine, my younger
 here,
 He is so full of lustihood, he will ride,
 Joust for it, and win, and bring it in
 an hour,
 And set it in this damsel's golden hair,
 To make her thrice as wilful as be-
 fore.'

'Nay, father, nay good father,
 shame me not
 Before this noble knight,' said young
 Lavaine,
 'For nothing. Surely I but play'd on
 Torre:
 He seem'd so sullen, vext he could
 not go:
 A jest, no more! for, knight, the
 maiden dreamt
 That some one put this diamond in
 her hand,
 And that it was too slippery to be held,
 And slipt and fell into some pool or
 stream,
 The castle-well, belike; and then I
 said
 That *if* I went and *if* I fought and
 won it
 (But all was jest and joke among our-
 selves)
 Then must she keep it safelier. All
 was jest.
 But, father, give me leave, an if he
 will,
 To ride to Camelot with this noble
 knight:
 Win shall I not, but do my best to win:

Young as I am, yet would I do my best.'

'So ye will grace me,' answer'd Lancelot,
Smiling a moment, 'with your fellowship

O'er these waste downs whereon I lost myself,

Then were I glad of you as guide and friend:

And you shall win this diamond,—as I hear

It is a fair large diamond,—if ye may, And yield it to this maiden, if ye will.'

'A fair large diamond,' added plain Sir Torre,

'Such be for queens, and not for simple maids.'

Then she, who held her eyes upon the ground,

Elaine, and heard her name so tost about,

Flush'd slightly at the slight disparagement

Before the stranger knight, who, looking at her,

Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus return'd:

'If what is fair be but for what is fair, And only queens are to be counted so, Rash were my judgment then, who deem this maid

Might wear as fair a jewel as is on earth,

Not violating the bond of like to like.'

He spoke and ceased: the lily maid Elaine,

Won by the mellow voice before she look'd,

Lifted her eyes, and read his lineaments.

The great and guilty love he bare the Queen,

In battle with the love he bare his lord,

Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it ere his time.

Another sinning on such heights with one,

The flower of all the west and all the world,

Had been the sleeker for it: but in him

His mood was often like a fiend, and rose

And drove him into wastes and solitudes

For agony, who was yet a living soul. Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest man

That ever among ladies ate in hall, And noblest, when she lifted up her eyes.

However marr'd, of more than twice her years,

Seem'd with an ancient swordcut on the cheek,

And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up her eyes

And loved him, with that love which was her doom.

Then the great knight, the darling of the court,

Loved of the loveliest, into that rude hall

Stept with all grace, and not with half disdain

Hid under grace, as in a smaller time, But kindly man moving among his kind:

Whom they with meats and vintage of their best

And talk and minstrel melody entertain'd.

And much they ask'd of court and Table Round,

And ever well and readily answer'd he: But Lancelot, when they glanced at Guinevere,

Suddenly speaking of the wordless man,

Heard from the Baron that, ten years before,

The heathen caught and reft him of his tongue.

'He learnt and warn'd me of their fierce design

Against my house, and him they caught and maim'd;

But I, my sons, and little daughter fled

From bonds or death, and dwelt among the woods

By the great river in a boatman's hut.
Dull days were those, till our good
Arthur broke
The Pagan yet once more on Badon
hill.'

'O there, great lord, doubtless,' La-
vaine said, rapt
By all the sweet and sudden passion
of youth
Toward greatness in its elder, 'you
have fought.
O tell us—for we live apart—you know
Of Arthur's glorious wars.' And
Lancelot spoke
And answer'd him at full, as having
been
With Arthur in the fight which all
day long
Rang by the white mouth of the vio-
lent Glen;
And in the four loud battles by the
shore
Of Duglas; that on Bassa; then the
war
That thunder'd in and out the gloomy
skirts
Of Celidon the forest; and again
By castle Gurnion, where the glori-
ous King
Had on his cuirass worn our Lady's
Head,
Carved of one emerald center'd in a
sun
Of silver rays, that lighten'd as he
breathed;
And at Caerleon had he help'd his
lord,
When the strong neighings of the
wild white Horse
Set every gilded parapet shuddering;
And up in Agned-Cathregonion too,
And down the waste sand-shores of
Trath Treroit,
Where many a heathen fell; 'and on
the mount
Of Badon I myself beheld the King
Charge at the head of all his Table
Round,
And all his legions crying Christ and
him,
And break them; and I saw him,
after, stand

High on a heap of slain, from spur to
plume
Red as the rising sun with heathen
blood,
And seeing me, with a great voice he
cried,
"They are broken, they are broken!"
for the King,
However mild he seems at home, nor
cares
For triumph in our mimic wars, the
jousts—
For if his own knight cast him down,
he laughs
Saying, his knights are better men
than he—
Yet in this heathen war the fire of
God
Fills him: I never saw his like: there
lives
No greater leader.'

While he utter'd this,
Low to her own heart said the lily
maid,
'Save your great self, fair lord;' and
when he fell
From talk of war to traits of pleas-
antry—
Feing mirthful he, but in a stately
kind—
She still took note that when the liv-
ing smile
Died from his lips, across him came a
cloud
Of melancholy severe, from which
again,
Whenever in her hovering to and fro
The lily maid had striven to make
him cheer,
There brake a sudden-beaming ten-
derness
Of manners and of nature: and she
thought
That all was nature, all, perchance, for
her.
And all night long his face before her
lived,
As when a painter, poring on a face,
Divinely thro' all hindrance finds the
man
Behind it, and so paints him that his
face,

The shape and color of a mind and
 life,
 Lives for his children, ever at its best
 And fullest; so the face before her
 lived,
 Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence,
 full
 Of noble things, and held her from
 her sleep.
 Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in
 the thought
 She needs must bid farewell to sweet
 Lavaine.
 First as in fear, step after step, she
 stole
 Down the long tower-stairs, hesitat-
 ing:
 Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry in
 the court,
 'This shield, my friend, where is it?'
 and Lavaine
 Past inward, as she came from out
 the tower.
 There to his proud horse Lancelot
 turn'd, and smooth'd
 The glossy shoulder, humming to
 himself.
 Half-envious of the flattering hand,
 she drew
 Nearer and stood. He look'd, and
 more amazed
 Than if seven men had set upon him,
 saw
 The maiden standing in the dewy
 light.
 He had not dream'd she was so beau-
 tiful.
 Then came on him a sort of sacred
 fear,
 For silent, tho' he greeted her, she
 stood
 Rapt on his face as if it were a God's.
 Suddenly flash'd on her a wild desire,
 That he should wear her favor at the
 tilt.
 She braved a riotous heart in asking
 for it.
 'Fair lord, whose name I know not—
 noble it is,
 I well believe, the noblest—will you
 wear
 My favor at this tourney?' 'Nay,'
 said he,

'Fair lady, since I never yet have
 worn
 Favor of any lady in the lists.
 Such is my wont, as those, who know
 me, know.'
 'Yea, so,' she answer'd; 'then in
 wearing mine
 Needs must be lesser likelihood,
 noble lord,
 That those who know should know
 you.' And he turn'd
 Her counsel up and down within his
 mind,
 And found it true, and answer'd,
 'True, my child.
 Well, I will wear it: fetch it out to
 me:
 What is it?' and she told him 'A red
 sleeve
 Broider'd with pearls,' and brought it:
 then he bound
 Her token on his helmet, with a smile
 Saying, 'I never yet have done so
 much
 For any maiden living,' and the blood
 Sprang to her face and fill'd her with
 delight;
 But left her all the paler, when Lavaine
 Returning brought the yet-unblazon'd
 shield,
 His brother's; which he gave to
 Lancelot,
 Who parted with his own to fair
 Elaine:
 'Do me this grace, my child, to have
 my shield
 In keeping till I come.' 'A grace to
 me,'
 She answer'd, 'twice to-day. I am
 your squire!'
 Whereat Lavaine said, laughing, 'Lily
 maid,
 For fear our people call you lily maid
 In earnest, let me bring your color
 back;
 Once, twice, and thrice: now get you
 hence to bed.'
 So kiss'd her, and Sir Lancelot his
 own hand,
 And thus they moved away: she stay'd
 a minute,
 'Then made a sudden step to the gate,
 and there—

Her bright hair blown about the serious face
 Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's kiss—
 Paused by the gateway, standing near the shield
 In silence, while she watch'd their arms far-off
 Sparkle, until they dipt below the downs.
 Then to her tower she climb'd, and took the shield,
 There kept it, and so lived in fantasy.

Meanwhile the new companions past away
 Far o'er the long backs of the bushless downs,
 To where Sir Lancelot knew there lived a knight
 Not far from Camelot, now for forty years
 A hermit, who had pray'd, labor'd and pray'd,
 And ever laboring had scoop'd himself
 In the white rock a chapel and a hall
 On massive columns, like a shorecliff cave,
 And cells and chambers: all were fair and dry;
 The green light from the meadows underneath
 Struck up and lived along the milky roofs;
 And in the meadows tremulous aspen-trees
 And poplars made a noise of falling showers.
 And thither wending there that night they bode.

But when the next day broke from underground,
 And shot red fire and shadows thro' the cave,
 They rose, heard mass, broke fast, and rode away:
 Then Lancelot saying, 'Hear, but hold my name
 Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the Lake,'
 Abash'd Lavaine, whose instant reverence,

Dearer to true young hearts than their own praise,
 But left him leave to stammer, 'Is it indeed?'
 And after muttering 'The great Lancelot,'
 At last he got his breath and answer'd, 'One,
 One have I seen—that other, our liege lord,
 The dread Pendragon, Britain's King of kings,
 Of whom the people talk mysteriously,
 He will be there—then were I stricken blind
 That minute, I might say that I had seen.'

So spake Lavaine, and when they reach'd the lists
 By Camelot in the meadow, let his eyes
 Run thro' the peopled gallery which half round
 Lay like a rainbow fall'n upon the grass,
 Until they found the clear-faced King, who sat
 Robed in red samite, easily to be known,
 Since to his crown the golden dragon clung,
 And down his robe the dragon writhed in gold,
 And from the carven-work behind him crept
 Two dragons gilded, sloping down to make
 Arms for his chair, while all the rest of them
 Thro' knots and loops and folds innumerable
 Fled ever thro' the woodwork, till they found
 The new design wherein they lost themselves,
 Yet with all ease, so tender was the work:
 And, in the costly canopy o'er him set,
 Blazed the last diamond of the nameless king.

Then Lancelot answer'd young Lavaine and said,



"MUFFLED DRUMS."—Page 89.

'Me you call great: mine is the
firmer seat,
The truer lance: but there is many a
youth
Now crescent, who will come to all I
am
And overcome it; and in me there
dwells
No greatness, save it be some far-off
touch
Of greatness to know well I am not
great:
There is the man.' And Lavaine
gaped upon him
As on a thing miraculous, and anon
The trumpets blew; and then did
either side,
They that assail'd, and they that held
the lists,
Set lance in rest, strike spur, suddenly
move,
Meet in the midst, and there so
furiously
Shock, that a man far-off might well
perceive,
If any man that day were left afield,
The hard earth shake, and a low
thunder of arms.
And Lancelot bode a little, till he
saw
Which were the weaker; then he
hurl'd into it
Against the stronger: little need to
speak
Of Lancelot in his glory! King,
duke, earl,
Count, baron—whom he smote, he
overthrew.

But in the field were Lancelot's kith
and kin,
Ranged with the Table Round that
held the lists,
Strong men, and wrathful that a
stranger knight
Should do and almost overdo the
deeds
Of Lancelot; and one said to the
other, 'Lo!
What is he? I do not mean the force
alone—
The grace and versatility of the
man!

Is it not Lancelot?' 'When has
Lancelot worn
Favor of any lady in the lists?
Not such his wont, as we, that know
him, know.'
'How then? who then?' a fury seized
them all,
A fiery family passion for the name
Of Lancelot, and a glory one with
theirs.
They couch'd their spears and prick'd
their steeds, and thus,
Their plumes driv'n backward by the
wind they made
In moving, all together down upon
him
Bare, as a wild wave in the wide
North-sea,
Green-glimmering toward the summit,
bears, with all
Its stormy crests that smoke against
the skies,
Down on a bark, and overbears the
bark,
And him that helms it, so they over-
bore
Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a
spear
Down-glancing lamed the charger, and
a spear
Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and
the head
Pierced thro' his side, and there snapt,
and remain'd.

Then Sir Lavaine did well and wor-
shipfully;
He bore a knight of old repute to the
earth,
And brought his horse to Lancelot
where he lay.
He up the side, sweating with agony,
got,
But thought to do while he might yet
endure,
And being lustily holpen by the rest,
His party,—tho' it seem'd half-miracle
To those he fought with,—drave his
kith and kin,
And all the Table Round that held
the lists,
Back to the barrier; then the trumpets
blew

Proclaiming his the prize, who wore
 the sleeve
 Of scarlet, and the pearls; and all the
 knights,
 His party, cried 'Advance and take
 thy prize
 The diamond;' but he answer'd,
 'Diamond me
 No diamonds! for God's love, a little
 air!
 Prize me no prizes, for my prize is
 death!
 Hence will I, and I charge you, follow
 me not.'

He spoke, and vanish'd suddenly
 from the field
 With young Lavaine into the poplar
 grove.
 There from his charger down he slid,
 and sat,
 Gasping to Sir Lavaine, 'Draw the
 lance-head.'
 'Ah my sweet lord Sir Lancelot,' said
 Lavaine,
 'I dread me, if I draw it, you will
 die.'
 But he, 'I die already with it: draw—
 Draw,'—and Lavaine drew, and Sir
 Lancelot gave
 A marvellous great shriek and ghastly
 groan,
 And half his blood burst forth, and
 down he sank
 For the pure pain, and wholly swoon'd
 away.
 Then came the hermit out and bare
 him in,
 There stanch'd his wound; and there,
 in daily doubt
 Whether to live or die, for many a
 week
 Hid from the wide world's rumor by
 the grove
 Of poplars with their noise of falling
 showers,
 And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he
 lay.

But on that day when Lancelot fled
 the lists,
 His party, knights of utmost North
 and West,

Lords of waste marches, kings of
 desolate isles,
 Came round their great Pendragon,
 saying to him,
 'Lo, Sire, our knight, thro' whom we
 won the day,
 Hath gone sore wounded, and hath
 left his prize
 Untaken, crying that his prize is
 death.'
 'Heaven hinder,' said the King, 'that
 such an one,
 So great a knight as we have seen to-
 day—
 He seem'd to me another Lancelot—
 Yea, twenty times I thought him
 Lancelot—
 He must not pass uncared for.
 Wherefore, rise,
 O Gawain, and ride forth and find the
 knight.
 Wounded and wearied needs must he
 be near.
 I charge you that you get at once to
 horse.
 And, knights and kings, there breathes
 not one of you
 Will deem this prize of ours is rashly
 given:
 His prowess was too wondrous. We
 will do him
 No customary honor: since the knight
 Came not to us, of us to claim the
 prize,
 Ourselves will send it after. Rise and
 take
 This diamond, and deliver it, and
 return,
 And bring us where he is, and how
 he fares,
 And cease not from your quest until
 ye find.'

So saying, from the carven flower
 above,
 To which it made a restless heart, he
 took,
 And gave, the diamond: then from
 where he sat
 At Arthur's right, with smiling face
 arose,
 With smiling face and frowning heart
 a Prince

In the mid might and flourish of his
 May,
 Gawain, surnamed The Courteous,
 fair and strong,
 And after Lancelot, Tristram, and
 Geraint
 And Gareth, a good knight, but there-
 withal
 Sir Modred's brother, and the child of
 Lot,
 Nor often loyal to his word, and
 now
 Wroth that the King's command to
 sally forth
 In quest of whom he knew not, made
 him leave
 The banquet, and concourse of knights
 and kings.

So all in wrath he got to horse and
 went;
 While Arthur to the banquet, dark in
 mood,
 Past, thinking 'Is it Lancelot who
 hath come
 Despite the wound he spake of, all for
 gain
 Of glory, and hath added wound to
 wound,
 And ridd'n away to die?' So fear'd
 the King,
 And, after two days' tarriance there,
 return'd.
 Then when he saw the Queen,
 embracing ask'd,
 'Love, are you yet so sick?' 'Nay,
 lord,' she said.
 'And where is Lancelot?' Then the
 Queen amazed,
 'Was he not with you? won he not
 your prize?'
 'Nay, but one like him.' 'Why that
 like was he.'
 And when the King demanded how
 she knew,
 Said, 'Lord, no sooner had ye parted
 from us,
 Than Lancelot told me of a common
 talk
 That men went down before his spear
 at a touch,
 But knowing he was Lancelot; his
 great name

Conquer'd; and therefore would he
 hide his name
 From all men, ev'n the King, and to
 this end
 Had made the pretext of a hindering
 wound,
 That he might joust unknown of all,
 and learn
 If his old prowess were in aught
 decay'd;
 And added, "Our true Arthur, when
 he learns,
 Will well allow my pretext, as for
 gain
 Of purer glory."

Then replied the King:
 'Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it
 been,
 In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,
 To have trusted me as he hath trusted
 thee.
 Surely his King and most familiar
 friend
 Might well have kept his secret.
 True, indeed,
 Albeit I know my knights fantastical,
 So fine a fear in our large Lancelot
 Must needs have moved my laughter:
 now remains
 But little cause for laughter: his own
 kin—
 Ill news, my Queen, for all who love
 him, this!—
 His kith and kin, not knowing, set
 upon him;
 So that he went sore wounded from
 the field:
 Yet good news too: for goodly hopes
 are mine
 That Lancelot is no more a lonely
 heart.
 He wore, against his wont, upon his
 helm
 A sleeve of scarlet, broider'd with
 great pearls,
 Some gentle maiden's gift.'

'Yea, lord,' she said,
 'Thy hopes are mine,' and saying
 that, she choked,
 And sharply turn'd about to hide her
 face,

Past to her chamber, and there flung
herself
Down on the great King's couch, and
writhed upon it,
And clench'd her fingers till they bit
the palm,
And shriek'd out 'Traitor' to the
unhearing wall,
Then flash'd into wild tears, and rose
again,
And moved about her palace, proud
and pale.

Gawain the while thro' all the
region round
Rode with his diamond, wearied of
the quest,
Touch'd at all points, except the
poplar grove,
And came at last, tho' late, to Astolat:
Whom glittering in enamell'd arms
the maid
Glanced at, and cried, 'What news
from Camelot, lord?
What of the knight with the red
sleeve?' 'He won.'
'I knew it,' she said. 'But parted
from the jousts
Hurt in the side,' whereat she caught
her breath;
Thro' her own side she felt the sharp
lance go;
Thereon she smote her hand: well-
nigh she swoon'd:
And, while he gazed wonderingly at
her, came
The Lord of Astolat out, to whom
the Prince
Reported who he was, and on what
quest
Sent, that he bore the prize and could
not find
The victor, but had ridd'n a random
round
To seek him, and had wearied of the
search.
To whom the Lord of Astolat, 'Bide
with us,
And ride no more at random, noble
Prince!
Here was the knight, and here he left
a shield;

This will he send or come for:
furthermore
Our son is with him; we shall hear
anon,
Needs must we hear.' To this the
courteous Prince
Accorded with his wonted courtesy,
Courtesy with a touch of traitor in it,
And stay'd; and cast his eyes on fair
Elaine:
Where could be found face daintier?
then her shape
From forehead down to foot, perfect
—again
From foot to forehead exquisitely
turn'd:
'Well—if I bide, lo! this wild flower
for me!
And oft they met among the garden
yews,
And there he set himself to play upon
her
With sallying wit, free flashes from a
height
Above her, graces of the court, and
songs,
Sighs, and slow smiles, and golden
eloquence
And amorous adulation, till the maid
Rebell'd against it, saying to him,
'Prince,
O loyal nephew of our noble King,
Why ask you not to see the shield he
left,
Whence you might learn his name?
Why slight your King,
And lose the quest he sent you on,
and prove
No surer than our falcon yesterday,
Who lost the hern we slept her at, and
went
To all the winds?' 'Nay, by mine
head,' said he,
'I lose it, as we lose the lark in
heaven,
O damsel, in the light of your blue
eyes;
But an ye will it let me see the
shield.'
And when the shield was brought,
and Gawain saw
Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crown'd
with gold,

Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh,
and mock'd :
'Right was the King! our Lancelot!
that true man!'
'And right was I,' she answer'd
merrily, 'I,
Who dream'd my knight the greatest
knight of all.'
'And if I dream'd,' said Gawain,
'that you love
This greatest knight, your pardon!
lo, ye know it!
Speak therefore: shall I waste myself
in vain?'
Full simple was her answer, 'What
know I?
My brethren have been all my fellow-
ship;
And I, when often they have talk'd of
love,
Wish'd it had been my mother, for
they talk'd,
Meseem'd, of what they knew not;
so myself—
I know not if I know what true love
is,
But if I know, then, if I love not
him,
I know there is none other I can love.'
'Yea, by God's death,' said he, 'ye
love him well,
But would not, knew ye what all
others know,
And whom he loves.' 'So be it,'
cried Elaine,
And lifted her fair face and moved
away :
But he pursued her, calling, 'Stay a
little!
One golden minute's grace! he wore
your sleeve :
Would he break faith with one I may
not name?
Must our true man change like a leaf
at last?
Nay—like enow: why then, far be it
from me
To cross our mighty Lancelot in his
loves!
And, damsel, for I deem you know
full well
Where your great knight is hidden, let
me leave

My quest with you; the diamond also:
here!
For if you love, it will be sweet to
give it;
And if he love, it will be sweet to have
it
From your own hand; and whether he
love or not,
A diamond is a diamond. Fare you
well
A thousand times!—a thousand times
farewell!
Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we
two
May meet at court hereafter: there, I
think,
So ye will learn the courtesies of the
court,
We two shall know each other.'

Then he gave,
And slightly kiss'd the hand to which
he gave,
The diamond, and all wearied of the
quest
Leapt on his horse, and carolling as
he went
A true-love ballad, lightly rode away.

Thence to the court he past; there
told the King
What the King knew, 'Sir Lancelot
is the knight.'
And added, 'Sire, my liege, so much I
learnt;
But fail'd to find him tho' I rode all
round
The region: but I lighted on the maid
Whose sleeve he wore; she loves
him; and to her,
Deeming our courtesy is the truest
law,
I gave the diamond: she will render
it;
For by mine head she knows his hid-
ing-place.'

The seldom-frowning King frown'd,
and replied,
'Too courteous truly! ye shall go no
more
On quest of mine, seeing that ye for-
get

Obedience is the courtesy due to kings.'

He spake and parted. Wroth, but all in awe,
For twenty strokes of the blood, without a word,
Linger'd that other, staring after him;
Then shook his hair, strode off, and buzz'd abroad
About the maid of Astolat, and her love.
All ears were prick'd at once, all tongues were loosed.
'The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lancelot,
Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat.'
Some read the King's face, some the Queen's, and all
Had marvel what the maid might be, but most
Predoom'd her as unworthy. One old dame
Came suddenly on the Queen with the sharp news.
She, that had heard the noise of it before,
But sorrowing Lancelot should have have stoop'd so low,
Marr'd her friend's aim with pale tranquillity.
So ran the tale like fire about the court,
Fire in dry stubble a nine-days' wonder flared:
Till ev'n the knights at banquet twice or thrice
Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the Queen,
And pledging Lancelot and the lily maid
Smiled at each other, while the Queen, who sat
With lips severely placid, felt the knot
Climb in her throat, and with her feet unseen
Crush'd the wild passion out against the floor
Beneath the banquet, where the meats became
As wormwood, and she hated all who pledged.

But far away the maid in Astolat,
Her guiltless rival, she that ever kept
The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her heart,
Crept to her father, while he mused alone,
Sat on his knee, stroked his gray face and said,
'Father, you call me wilful, and the fault
Is yours who let me have my will, and now,
Sweet father, will you let me lose my wits?'
'Nay,' said he, 'surely.' 'Wherefore, let me hence,'
She answer'd, 'and find out our dear Lavaine.'
'Ye will not lose your wits for dear Lavaine:
Bide,' answer'd he: 'we needs must hear anon
Of him, and of that other.' 'Ay,' she said,
'And of that other, for I needs must hence
And find that other, wheresoe'er he be,
And with mine own hand give his diamond to him,
Lest I be found as faithless in the quest
As yon proud Prince who left the quest to me.
Sweet father, I behold him in my dreams
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,
Death-pale, for lack of gentle maiden's aid.
The gentler-born the maiden, the more bound,
My father, to be sweet and serviceable
To noble knights in sickness, as ye know
When these have worn their tokens: let me hence
I pray you.' Then her father nodding said,
'Ay, ay, the diamond: wit ye well, my child,
Right fain were I to learn this knight were whole,

Being our greatest: yea, and you
must give it—
And sure I think this fruit is hung too
high
For any mouth to gape for save a
queen's—
Nay, I mean nothing: so then, get
you gone,
Being so very wilful you must go.'

Lightly, her suit allow'd, she slipt
away,
And while she made her ready for her
ride,
Her father's latest word humm'd in
her ear,
'Being so very wilful you must go,'
And changed itself and echo'd in her
heart,
'Being so very wilful you must die.'
But she was happy enough and shook
it off,
As we shake off the bee that buzzes at
us;
And in her heart she answer'd it and
said,
'What matter, so I help him back to
life?'
Then far away with good Sir Torre
for guide
Rode o'er the long backs of the bush-
less downs
To Camelot, and before the city-gates
Came on her brother with a happy face
Making a roan horse caper and curvet
For pleasure all about a field of flow-
ers:
Whom when she saw, 'Lavaine,' she
cried, 'Lavaine,
How fares my lord Sir Lancelot?'
He amazed,
'Torre and Elaine! why here? Sir
Lancelot!
How know ye my lord's name is
Lancelot?'
But when the maid had told him all
her tale,
Then turn'd Sir Torre, and being in
his moods
Left them, and under the strange-
statued gate,
Where Arthur's wars were render'd
mystically,

Past up the still rich city to his kin,
His own far blood, which dwelt at
Camelot;
And her, Lavaine across the poplar
grove
Led to the caves: there first she saw
the casque
Of Lancelot on the wall: her scarlet
sleeve,
Tho' carved and cut, and half the
pearls away,
Stream'd from it still; and in her
heart she laugh'd,
Because he had not loosed it from his
helm,
But meant once more perchance to
tourney in it.
And when they gain'd the cell wherein
he slept,
His battle-writhen arms and mighty
hands
Lay naked on the wolfskin, and a
dream
Of dragging down his enemy made
them move.
Then she that saw him lying unsleek,
unshorn,
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of him-
self,
Utter'd a little tender dolorous cry.
The sound not wonted in a place so
still
Woke the sick knight, and while he
roll'd his eyes
Yet blank from sleep, she started to
him, saying,
'Your prize the diamond sent you by
the King:'
His eyes glisten'd: she fancied 'Is it
for me?'
And when the maid had told him all
the tale
Of King and Prince, the diamond
sent, the quest
Assign'd to her not worthy of it, she
knelt
Full lowly by the corners of his bed,
And laid the diamond in his open
hand.
Her face was near, and as we kiss the
child
That does the task assign'd, he kiss'd
her face.

At once she slipt like water to the
 floor.
 'Alas,' he said, 'your ride hath
 wearied you.
 Rest must you have.' 'No rest for
 me,' she said;
 Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at
 rest.'
 What might she mean by that? his
 large black eyes,
 Yet larger thro' his leanness, dwelt
 upon her,
 Till all her heart's sad secret blazed
 itself
 In the heart's colors on her simple
 face;
 And Lancelot look'd and was per-
 plext in mind,
 And being weak in body said no
 more;
 But did not love the color; woman's
 love,
 Save one, he not regarded, and so
 turn'd
 Sighing, and feign'd a sleep until he
 slept.

Then rose Elaine and glided thro'
 the fields,
 And past beneath the weirdly-sculpt-
 ured gates
 Far up the dim rich city to her kin;
 There bode the night: but woke with
 dawn, and past
 Down thro' the dim rich city to the
 fields,
 Thence to the cave: so day by day
 she past
 In either twilight ghost-like to and fro
 Gliding, and every day she tended
 him,
 And likewise many a night: and
 Lancelot
 Would, tho' he call'd his wound a
 little hurt
 Whereof he should be quickly whole,
 at times
 Brain-feverous in his heat and agony,
 seem
 Uncourteous, even he: but the meek
 maid
 Sweetly forbore him ever, being to
 him

Meeker than any child to a rough
 nurse,
 Milder than any mother to a sick
 child,
 And never woman yet, since man's
 first fall,
 Did kindlier unto man, but her deep
 love
 Upbore her; till the hermit, skill'd in
 all
 The simples and the science of that
 time,
 Told him that her fine care had saved
 his life.
 And the sick man forgot her simple
 blush,
 Would call her friend and sister,
 sweet Elaine,
 Would listen for her coming and
 regret
 Her parting step, and held her
 tenderly,
 And loved her with all love except
 the love
 Of man and woman when they love
 their best,
 Closest and sweetest, and had died
 the death
 In any knightly fashion for her sake.
 And peradventure had he seen her
 first
 She might have made this and that
 other world
 Another world for the sick man; but
 now
 The shackles of an old love straiten'd
 him,
 His honor rooted in dishonor stood,
 And faith unfaithful kept him falsely
 true.

Yet the great knight in his mid-
 sickness made
 Full many a holy vow and pure
 resolve.
 These, as but born of sickness, could
 not live:
 For when the blood ran lustier in him
 again,
 Full often the bright image of one
 face,
 Making a treacherous quiet in his
 heart,

Dispersed his resolution like a cloud.
 Then if the maiden, while that
 ghostly grace
 Beam'd on his fancy, spoke, he
 answer'd not,
 Or short and coldly, and she knew
 right well
 What the rough sickness meant, but
 what this meant
 She knew not, and the sorrow dimm'd
 her sight,
 And drave her ere her time across the
 fields
 Far into the rich city, where alone
 She murmur'd, 'Vain, in vain: it
 cannot be.
 He will not love me: how then?
 must I die?'
 Then as a little helpless innocent
 bird,
 That has but one plain passage of few
 notes,
 Will sing the simple passage o'er and
 o'er
 For all an April morning, till the ear
 Wearies to hear it, so the simple
 maid
 Went half the night repeating, 'Must
 I die?'
 And now to right she turn'd, and now
 to left,
 And found no ease in turning or in
 rest;
 And 'Him or death,' she mutter'd,
 'death or him,'
 Again and like a burthen, 'Him or
 death.'

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly
 hurt was whole,
 To Astolat returning rode the three.
 There morn by morn, arraying her
 sweet self
 In that wherein she deem'd she look'd
 her best,
 She came before Sir Lancelot, for she
 thought
 'If I be loved, these are my festal
 robes,
 If not, the victim's flowers before he
 fall.'
 And Lancelot ever prest upon the
 maid

That she should ask some goodly gift
 of him
 For her own self or hers; 'and do
 not shun
 To speak the wish most near to your
 true heart;
 Such service have ye done me, that I
 make
 My will of yours, and Prince and
 Lord am I
 In mine own land, and what I will I
 can.'
 Then like a ghost she lifted up her face,
 But like a ghost without the power to
 speak.
 And Lancelot saw that she withheld
 her wish,
 And bode among them yet a little
 space
 Till he should learn it; and one morn
 it chanced
 He found her in among the garden
 yews,
 And said, 'Delay no longer, speak
 your wish,
 Seeing I go to-day:' then out she
 brake:
 'Going? and we shall never see you
 more.
 And I must die for want of one bold
 word.'
 'Speak: that I live to hear,' he said,
 'is yours.'
 Then suddenly and passionately she
 spoke:
 'I have gone mad. I love you: let
 me die.'
 'Ah, sister,' answer'd Lancelot, 'what
 is this?'
 And innocently extending her white
 arms,
 'Your love,' she said, 'your love—to
 be your wife.'
 And Lancelot answer'd, 'Had I
 chosen to wed,
 I had been wedded earlier, sweet
 Elaine:
 But now there never will be wife of
 mine.'
 'No, no,' she cried, 'I care not to be
 wife,
 But to be with you still, to see your
 face,

To serve you, and to follow you thro'
the world.'

And Lancelot answer'd, 'Nay, the
world, the world,
All ear and eye, with such a stupid
heart
To interpret ear and eye, and such a
tongue
To blare its own interpretation—nay,
Full ill then should I quit your
brother's love,
And your good father's kindness.'
And she said,
'Not to be with you, not to see your
face—
Alas for me then, my good days are
done.'

'Nay, noble maid,' he answer'd, 'ten
times nay!
This is not love: but love's first flash
in youth,
Most common: yea, I know it of
mine own self:
And you yourself will smile at your
own self
Hereafter, when you yield your flower
of life
To one more fitly yours, not thrice
your age:
And then will I, for true you are and
sweet
Beyond mine old belief in womanhood,
More specially should your good
knight be poor,
Endow you with broad land and terri-
tory
Even to the half my realm beyond the
seas,
So that would make you happy: fur-
thermore,
Ev'n to the death, as tho' ye were my
blood,
In all your quarrels will I be your
knight.
This will I do, dear damsel, for your
sake,
And more than this I cannot.'

While he spoke
She neither blush'd nor shook, but
deathly-pale
Stood grasping what was nearest, then
replied:

'Of all this will I nothing;' and so
fell,
And thus they bore her swooning to
her tower.

Then spake, to whom thro' those
black walls of yew
Their talk had pierced, her father:
'Ay, a flash,
I fear me, that will strike my blossom
dead.
Too courteous are ye, fair Lord Lance-
lot.
I pray you, use some rough discour-
tesy
To blunt or break her passion.'

Lancelot said,
'That were against me: what I can I
will;'
And there that day remain'd, and to-
ward even
Sent for his shield: full meekly rose
the maid,
Stript off the case, and gave the naked
shield;
Then, when she heard his horse upon
the stones,
Unclasp'd flung the casement back,
and look'd
Down on his helm, from which her
sleeve had gone.
And Lancelot knew the little clinking
sound;
And she by tact of love was well aware
That Lancelot knew that she was look-
ing at him.
And yet he glanced not up, nor waved
his hand,
Nor bad farewell, but sadly rode
away.
This was the one discourtesy that he
used.

So in her tower alone the maiden sat:
His very shield was gone; only the
case,
Her own poor work, her empty labor,
left.
But still she heard him, still his pict-
ure form'd
And grew between her and the pict-
ured wall.

Then came her father, saying in low tones,
 'Have comfort,' whom she greeted quietly.
 Then came her brethren saying, 'Peace to thee,
 Sweet sister,' whom she answer'd with all calm.
 But when they left her to herself again,
 Death, like a friend's voice from a distant field
 Approaching thro' the darkness, call'd; the owls
 Wailing had power upon her, and she mixt
 Her fancies with the fallow-rifted glooms
 Of evening, and the moanings of the wind.

And in those days she made a little song,
 And call'd her song 'The Song of Love and Death,'
 And sang it: sweetly could she make and sing.

'Sweet is true love tho' given in vain, in vain;
 And sweet is death who puts an end to pain:
 I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

'Love, art thou sweet? then bitter death must be:
 Love, thou art bitter; sweet is death to me.
 O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

'Sweet love, that seems not made to fade away,
 Sweet death, that seems to make us loveless clay,
 I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

'I fain would follow love, if that could be;
 I needs must follow death, who calls for me;
 Call and I follow, I follow! let me die.'

High with the last line scaled her voice, and this,
 All in a fiery dawning wild with wind
 That shook her tower, the brothers heard, and thought
 With shuddering, 'Hark the Phantom of the house
 That ever shrieks before a death,' and call'd
 The father, and all three in hurry and fear
 Ran to her, and lo! the blood-red light of dawn
 Flared on her face, she shrilling, 'Let me die!'

As when we dwell upon a word we know,
 Repeating, till the word we know so well
 Becomes a wonder, and we know not why,
 So dwelt the father on her face, and thought
 'Is this Elaine?' till back the maiden fell,
 Then gave a languid hand to each, and lay,
 Speaking a still good-morrow with her eyes.
 At last she said, 'Sweet brothers, yesternight
 I seem'd a curious little maid again,
 As happy as when we dwelt among the woods,
 And when ye used to take me with the flood
 Up the great river in the boatman's boat.
 Only ye would not pass beyond the cape
 That has the poplar on it: there ye fixt
 Your limit, oft returning with the tide.
 And yet I cried because ye would not pass
 Beyond it, and far up the shining flood
 Until we found the palace of the King.
 And yet ye would not; but this night I dream'd
 That I was all alone upon the flood,
 And then I said, "Now shall I have my will:"

And there I woke, but still the wish
 remain'd.
 So let me hence that I may pass at
 last
 Beyond the poplar and far up the
 flood,
 Until I find the palace of the King.
 There will I enter in among them all,
 And no man there will dare to mock
 at me;
 But there the fine Gawain will wonder
 at me,
 And there the great Sir Lancelot
 muse at me;
 Gawain, who bad a thousand farewells
 to me,
 Lancelot, who coldly went, nor bad
 me one:
 And there the King will know me and
 my love,
 And there the Queen herself will pity
 me,
 And all the gentle court will welcome
 me,
 And after my long voyage I shall
 rest!'

'Peace,' said her father, 'O my
 child, ye seem
 Light-headed, for what force is yours
 to go
 So far, being sick? and wherefore
 would ye look
 On this proud fellow again, who scorns
 us all?'

Then the rough Torre began to
 heave and move,
 And bluster into stormy sobs and say,
 'I never loved him: an I meet with
 him,
 I care not howsoever great he be,
 Then will I strike at him and strike
 him down,
 Give me good fortune, I will strike
 him dead,
 For this discomfort he hath done the
 house.'

To whom the gentle sister made
 reply,
 'Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor
 be wroth,

Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot's
 fault
 Not to love me, than it is mine to love
 Him of all men who seems to me the
 highest.'

'Highest?' the father answer'd,
 echoing 'highest?'
 (He meant to break the passion in
 her) 'nay,
 Daughter, I know not what you call
 the highest;
 But this I know, for all the people
 know it,
 He loves the Queen, and in an open
 shame:
 And she returns his love in open
 shame;
 If this be high, what is it to be low?'

Then spake the lily maid of Asto-
 lat:
 'Sweet father, all too faint and sick
 am I
 For anger: these are slanders: never
 yet
 Was noble man but made ignoble
 talk.
 He makes no friend who never made
 a foe.
 But now it is my glory to have loved
 One peerless, without stain: so let me
 pass,
 My father, howsoever I seem to you,
 Not all unhappy, having loved God's
 best
 And greatest, tho' my love had no
 return:
 Yet, seeing you desire your child to
 live,
 Thanks, but you work against your
 own desire;
 For if I could believe the things you
 say
 I should but die the sooner; where-
 fore cease,
 Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly
 man
 Hither, and let me shrive me clean,
 and die.'

So when the ghostly man had come
 and gone,

She with a face, bright as for sin forgiven,
 Besought Lavaine to write as she devised
 A letter, word for word; and when he ask'd
 'Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear lord?
 Then will I bear it gladly;' she replied,
 'For Lancelot and the Queen and all the world,
 But I myself must bear it.' Then he wrote
 The letter she devised; which being writ
 And folded, 'O sweet father, tender and true,
 Deny me not,' she said—'ye never yet
 Denied my fancies—this, however strange,
 My latest: lay the letter in my hand
 A little ere I die, and close the hand
 Upon it; I shall guard it even in death.
 And when the heat is gone from out my heart,
 Then take the little bed on which I died
 For Lancelot's love, and deck it like the Queen's
 For richness, and me also like the Queen
 In all I have of rich, and lay me on it.
 And let there be prepared a chariot-bier
 To take me to the river, and a barge
 Be ready on the river, clothed in black.
 I go in state to court, to meet the Queen.
 There surely I shall speak for mine own self,
 And none of you can speak for me so well.
 And therefore let our dumb old man alone
 Go with me, he can steer and row, and he
 Will guide me to that palace, to the doors.'

She ceased: her father promised;
 whereupon

She grew so cheerful that they deem'd
 her death
 Was rather in the fantasy than the blood.
 But ten slow mornings past, and on the eleventh
 Her father laid the letter in her hand,
 And closed the hand upon it, and she died.
 So that day there was dole in Astolat.

But when the next sun brake from underground,
 Then, those two brethren slowly with bent brows
 Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier
 Past like a shadow thro' the field, that shone
 Full-summer, to that stream whereon the barge,
 Pall'd all its length in blackest samite, lay.
 There sat the lifelong creature of the house,
 Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,
 Winking his eyes, and twisted all his face.
 So those two brethren from the chariot took
 And on the black decks laid her in her bed,
 Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung
 The silken case with braided blazonings,
 And kiss'd her quiet brows, and saying to her
 'Sister, farewell for ever,' and again
 'Farewell, sweet sister,' parted all in tears.
 Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the dead,
 Oar'd by the dumb, went upward with the flood—
 In her right hand the lily, in her left
 The letter—all her bright hair streaming down—
 And all the coverlid was cloth of gold
 Drawn to her waist, and she herself in white
 All but her face, and that clear-featured face
 Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead,

But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she
smiled.

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace
craved
Audience of Guinevere, to give at
last
The price of half a realm, his costly
gift,
Hard-won and hardly won with bruise
and blow,
With deaths of others, and almost his
own,
The nine-years-fought-for diamonds:
for he saw
One of her house, and sent him to the
Queen
Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen
agreed
With such and so unmoved a majesty
She might have seem'd her statue, but
that he,
Low-drooping till he wellnigh kiss'd
her feet
For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong eye
The shadow of some piece of pointed
lace,
In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the
walls,
And parted, laughing in his courtly
heart.

All in an oriel on the summer side,
Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward
the stream,
They met, and Lancelot kneeling
utter'd, 'Queen,
Lady, my liege, in whom I have my
joy,
Take, what I had not won except for
you,
These jewels, and make me happy,
making them
An armlet for the roundest arm on
earth,
Or necklace for a neck to which the
swan's
Is tawnier than her cygnet's: these
are words:
Your beauty is your beauty, and I
sin
In speaking, yet O grant my worship
of it

Words, as we grant grief tears. Such
sin in words
Perchance, we both can pardon: but,
my Queen,
I hear of rumors flying thro' your
court.
Our bond, as not the bond of man
and wife,
Should have in it an absoluter trust
To make up that defect: let rumors
be:
When did not rumors fly? these, as I
trust
That you trust me in your own noble-
ness,
I may not well believe that you
believe.'

While thus he spoke, half turn'd
away, the Queen
Brake from the vast oriel-embowering
vine
Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast
them off,
Till all the place whereon she stood
was green;
Then, when he ceased, in one cold
passive hand
Received at once and laid aside the
gems
There on a table near her, and
replied:

'It may be, I am quicker of belief
Than you believe me, Lancelot of the
Lake.
Our bond is not the bond of man and
wife.
This good is in it, whatso'er of
ill,
It can be broken easier. I for you
This many a year have done despite
and wrong
To one whom ever in my heart of
hearts
I did acknowledge nobler. What are
these?
Diamonds for me! they had been
thrice their worth
Being your gift, had you not lost your
own.
To loyal hearts the value of all
gifts

Must vary as the giver's. Not for
me!
For her! for your new fancy. Only
this
Grant me, I pray you: have your
joys apart.
I doubt not that however changed,
you keep
So much of what is graceful: and
myself
Would shun to break those bounds of
courtesy
In which as Arthur's Queen I move
and rule:
So cannot speak my mind. An end to
this!
A strange one! yet I take it with
Amen.
So pray you, add my diamonds to her
pearls;
Deck her with these; tell her, she
shines me down:
An armlet for an arm to which the
Queen's
Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck
O as much fairer—as a faith once
fair
Was richer than these diamonds—
hers not mine—
Nay, by the mother of our Lord him-
self,
Or hers or mine, mine now to work
my will—
She shall not have them.'

Saying which she seized,
And, thro' the casement standing
wide for heat,
Flung them, and down they flash'd,
and smote the stream.
Then from the smitten surface flash'd,
as it were,
Diamonds to meet them, and they
past away.
Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half
disdain
At love, life, all things, on the window
ledge,
Close underneath his eyes, and right
across
Where these had fallen, slowly past
the barge
Whereon the lily maid of Astolat

Lay smiling, like a star in blackest
night.

But the wild Queen, who saw not,
burst away
To weep and wail in secret; and the
barge,
On to the palace-doorway sliding,
paused.
There two stood arm'd, and kept the
door; to whom,
All up the marble stair, tier over tier,
Were added mouths that gaped, and
eyes that ask'd
'What is it?' but that oarsman's
haggard face,
As hard and still as is the face that
men
Shape to their fancy's eye from
broken rocks
On some cliff-side, appall'd them, and
they said,
'He is enchanted, cannot speak—and
she,
Look how she sleeps—the Fairy
Queen, so fair!
Yea, but how pale! what are they?
flesh and blood?
Or come to take the King to Fairy-
land?
For some do hold our Arthur cannot
die,
But that he passes into Fairyland.'

While thus they babbled of the
King, the King
Came girt with knights: then turn'd
the tongueless man
From the half-face to the full eye,
and rose
And pointed to the damsel, and the
doors.
So Arthur bad the meek Sir Percivale
And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the
maid;
And reverently they bore her into
hall.
Then came the fine Gawain and
wonder'd at her,
And Lancelot later came and mused
at her,
And last the Queen herself, and pitied
her:

But Arthur spied the letter in her hand,
Stoopt, took, brake seal, and read it;
this was all:

‘Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the Lake,
I, sometime call’d the maid of Astolat,
Come, for you left me taking no farewell,
Hither, to take my last farewell of you.
I loved you, and my love had no return,
And therefore my true love has been my death.
And therefore to our Lady Guinevere,
And to all other ladies, I make moan:
Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.
Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lancelot,
As thou art a knight peerless.’

Thus he read;
And ever in the reading, lords and dames
Wept, looking often from his face who read
To hers which lay so silent, and at times,
So touch’d were they, half-thinking that her lips,
Who had devised the letter, moved again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them all:
‘My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that hear,
Know that for this most gentle maiden’s death
Right heavy am I; for good she was and true,
But loved me with a love beyond all love
In women, whomsoever I have known.
Yet to be loved makes not to love again;
Not at my years, however it hold in youth.

I swear by truth and knighthood that I gave
No cause, not willingly, for such a love:
To this I call my friends in testimony,
Her brethren, and her father, who himself
Besought me to be plain and blunt, and use,
To break her passion, some discourtesy
Against my nature: what I could, I did.
I left her and I bad her no farewell;
Tho’, had I dreamt the damsel would have died,
I might have put my wits to some rough use,
And help’d her from herself.’

Then said the Queen
(Sea was her wrath, yet working after storm)
‘Ye might at least have done her so much grace,
Fair lord, as would have help’d her from her death.’
He raised his head, their eyes met and hers fell,
He adding,
‘Queen, she would not be content
Save that I wedded her, which could not be.
Then might she follow me thro’ the world, she ask’d;
It could not be. I told her that her love
Was but the flash of youth, would darken down
To rise hereafter in a stiller flame
Toward one more worthy of her—then would I,
More specially were he, she wedded, poor,
Estate them with large land and territory
In mine own realm beyond the narrow seas,
To keep them in all joyance: more than this
I could not; this she would not, and she died.’

He pausing, Arthur answer'd, 'O
my knight,
It will be to thy worship, as my
knight,
And mine, as head of all our Table
Round,
To see that she be buried worship-
fully.'

So toward that shrine which then in
all the realm
Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly
went
The marshall'd Order of their Table
Round,
And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, to
see
The maiden buried, not as one
unknown,
Nor meanly, but with gorgeous obse-
quies,
And mass, and rolling music, like a
queen.
And when the knights had laid her
comely head
Low in the dust of half-forgotten
kings,
Then Arthur spake among them, 'Let
her tomb
Be costly, and her image thereupon,
And let the shield of Lancelot at her
feet
Be carven, and her lily in her hand.
And let the story of her dolorous
voyage
For all true hearts be blazon'd on her
tomb
In letters gold and azure!' which was
wrought
Thereafter; but when now the lords
and dames
And people, from the high door
streaming, brake
Disorderly, as homeward each, the
Queen,
Who mark'd Sir Lancelot where he
moved apart,
Drew near, and sigh'd in passing,
'Lancelot,
Forgive me; mine was jealousy in
love.'
He answer'd with his eyes upon the
ground,

'That is love's curse; pass on, my
Queen, forgiven.'
But Arthur, who beheld his cloudy
brows,
Approach'd him, and with full affec-
tion said,

'Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in
whom I have
Most joy and most affiance, for I know
What thou hast been in battle by my
side,
And many a time have watch'd thee
at the tilt
Strike down the lusty and long prac-
tised knight,
And let the younger and unskill'd go
by
To win his honor and to make his
name,
And loved thy courtesies and thee, a
man
Made to be loved; but now I would
to God,
Seeing the homeless trouble in thine
eyes,
Thou couldst have loved this maiden,
shaped, it seems,
By God for thee alone, and from her
face,
If one may judge the living by the
dead,
Delicately pure and marvellously fair,
Who might have brought thee, now a
lonely man
Wifeless and heirless, noble issue,
sons
Born to the glory of thy name and
fame,
My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of
the Lake.'

Then answer'd Lancelot, 'Fair she
was, my King,
Pure, as you ever wish your knights
to be.
To doubt her fairness were to want an
eye,
To doubt her pureness were to want a
heart—
Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy love
Could bind him, but free love will not
be bound.'

'Free love, so bound, were freest,'
 said the King.
 'Let love be free; free love is for the
 best:
 And, after heaven, on our dull side of
 death,
 What should be best, if not so pure a
 love
 Clothed in so pure a loveliness? yet
 thee
 She fail'd to bind, tho' being, as I
 think,
 Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I
 know.'

And Lancelot answer'd nothing, but
 he went,
 And at the inrunning of a little brook
 Sat by the river in a cove, and
 watch'd
 The high reed wave, and lifted up his
 eyes
 And saw the barge that brought her
 moving down,
 Far-off, a blot upon the stream, and
 said
 Low in himself, 'Ah simple heart and
 sweet,
 Ye loved me, damsel, surely with a
 love
 Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray
 for thy soul?
 Ay, that will I. Farewell too—now at
 last—
 Farewell, fair lily. "Jealousy in
 love?"
 Not rather dead love's harsh heir,
 jealous pride?
 Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of
 love,
 May not your crescent fear for name
 and fame
 Speak, as it waxes, of a love that
 wanes?
 Why did the King dwell on my name
 to me?
 Mine own name shames me, seeming a
 reproach,
 Lancelot, whom the Lady of the Lake
 Caught from his mother's arms—the
 wondrous one
 Who passes thro' the vision of the
 night—

She chanted snatches of mysterious
 hymns
 Heard on the winding waters, eve and
 morn
 She kiss'd me saying, "Thou art fair,
 my child,
 As a king's son," and often in her
 arms
 She bare me, pacing on the dusky
 mere.
 Would she had drown'd me in it,
 where'er it be!
 For what am I? what profits me my
 name
 Of greatest knight? I fought for it,
 and have it:
 Pleasure to have it, none; to lose it,
 pain;
 Now grown a part of me: but what
 use in it?
 To make men worse by making my
 sin known?
 Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming
 great?
 Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a
 man
 Not after Arthur's heart! I needs
 must break
 These bonds that so defame me: not
 without
 She wills it: would I, if she will'd it?
 nay,
 Who knows? but if I would not, then
 may God,
 I pray him, send a sudden Angel down
 To seize me by the hair and bear me
 far,
 And fling me deep in that forgotten
 mere,
 Among the tumbled fragments of the
 hills.'

So groan'd Sir Lancelot in remorse-
 ful pain,
 Not knowing he should die a holy
 man.

THE HOLY GRAIL.

FROM noiseful arms, and acts of
 prowess done
 In tournament or tilt, Sir Percivale,

Whom Arthur and his knighthood
call'd The Pure,
Had pass'd into the silent life of
prayer,
Praise, fast, and alms; and leaving for
the cowl
The helmet in an abbey far away
From Camelot, there, and not long
after, died.

And one, a fellow-monk among the
rest,
Ambrosius, loved him much beyond
the rest,
And honor'd him, and wrought into
his heart
A way by love that waken'd love within,
To answer that which came: and as
they sat
Beneath a world-old yew-tree, darken-
ing half
The cloisters, on a gustful April morn
That puff'd the swaying branches
into smoke
Above them, ere the summer when he
died,
The monk Ambrosius question'd Per-
civale:

'O brother, I have seen this yew-
tree smoke,
Spring after spring, for half a hun-
dred years:
For never have I known the world
without,
Nor ever stray'd beyond the pale:
but thee,
When first thou camest—such a
courtesy
Spake thro' the limbs and in the
voice—I knew
For one of those who eat in Arthur's
hall;
For good ye are and bad, and like to
coins,
Some true, some light, but every one
of you
Stamp'd with the image of the King;
and now
Tell me, what drove thee from the
Table Round,
My brother? was it earthly passion
crost?'

'Nay,' said the knight; 'for no
such passion mine.
But the sweet vision of the Holy
Grail
Drove me from all vainglories, rival-
ries,
And earthly heats that spring and
sparkle out
Among us in the jousts, while women
watch
Who wins, who falls; and waste the
spiritual strength
Within us, better offer'd up to
Heaven.'

To whom the monk: 'The Holy
Grail!—I trust
We are green in Heaven's eyes; but
here too much
We moulder—as to things without I
mean—
Yet one of your own knights, a guest of
ours,
Told us of this in our refectory,
But spake with such a sadness and so
low
We heard not half of what he said.
What is it?
The phantom of a cup that comes and
goes?'

'Nay, monk! what phantom?' an-
swer'd Percivale.
'The cup, the cup itself, from which
our Lord
Drank at the last sad supper with his
own.
This, from the blessed land of Aro-
mat—
After the day of darkness, when the
dead
Went wandering o'er Moriah—the
good saint
Arimathæan Joseph, journeying
brought
To Glastonbury, where the winter
thorn
Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of
our Lord.
And there awhile it bode; and if a
man
Could touch or see it, he was heal'd
• at once,

By faith, of all his ills. But then the
times
Grew to such evil that the holy cup
Was caught away to Heaven, and
disappear'd.'

To whom the monk: 'From our
old books I know
That Joseph came of old to Glaston-
bury,
And there the heathen Prince, Arvi-
ragus,
Gave him an isle of marsh whereon to
build;
And there he built with wattles from
the marsh
A little lonely church, in days of
yore,
For so they say, these books of ours,
but seem
Mute of this miracle, far as I have
read.
But who first saw the holy thing to-
day?'

'A woman,' answer'd Percivale, 'a
nun,
And one no further off in blood from
me
Than sister; and if ever holy maid
With knees of adoration wore the
stone,
A holy maid; tho' never maiden
glow'd,
But that was in her earlier maiden-
hood,
With such a fervent flame of human
love,
Which being rudely blunted, glanced
and shot
Only to holy things; to prayer and
praise
She gave herself, to fast and alms.
And yet,
Nun as she was, the scandal of the
Court,
Sin against Arthur and the Table
Round,
And the strange sound of an adulter-
ous race,
Across the iron grating of her cell
Beat, and she pray'd and fasted all
the more.

'And he to whom she told her sins,
or what
Her all but utter whiteness held for
sin,
A man wellnigh a hundred winters
old,
Spake often with her of the Holy
Grail,
A legend handed down thro' five or
six,
And each of these a hundred winters
old,
From our Lord's time. And when
King Arthur made
His Table Round, and all men's
hearts became
Clean for a season, surely he had
thought
That now the Holy Grail would come
again;
But sin broke out. Ah, Christ, that
it would come,
And heal the world of all their wicked-
ness!
'O Father!' asked the maiden,
"might it come
To me by prayer and fasting?"
"Nay," said he,
"I know not, for thy heart is pure as
snow."
And so she pray'd and fasted, till the
sun
Shone, and the wind blew, thro' her,
and I thought
She might have risen and floated when
I saw her.

'For on a day she sent to speak
with me.
And when she came to speak, behold
her eyes
Beyond my knowing of them, beauti-
ful,
Beyond all knowing of them, wonder-
ful,
Beautiful in the light of holiness.
And "O my brother Percivale," she
said,
"Sweet brother, I have seen the Holy
Grail:
For, waked at dead of night, I heard
a sound
As of a silver horn from o'er the hills



"ARMED TOWERS."—Page 94.

Blown, and I thought, 'It is not
Arthur's use
To hunt by moonlight;' and the
slender sound
As from a distance beyond distance
grew
Coming upon me—O never harp nor
horn,
Nor aught we blow with breath, or
touch with hand,
Was like that music as it came; and
then
Stream'd thro' my cell a cold and
silver beam,
And down the long beam stole the
Holy Grail,
Rose-red with beatings in it, as if
alive,
Till all the white walls of my cell were
dyed
With rosy colors leaping on the wall:
And then the music faded, and the
Grail
Past, and the beam decay'd, and from
the walls
The rosy quiverings died into the
night.
So now the Holy Thing is here again
Among us, brother, fast thou too and
pray,
And tell thy brother knights to fast
and pray,
That so perchance the vision may be
seen
By thee and those, and all the world
be heal'd."

'Then leaving the pale nun, I
spake of this
To all men; and myself fasted and
pray'd
Always, and many among us many a
week
Fasted and pray'd even to the utter-
most,
Expectant of the wonder that would
be.

'And one there was among us,
ever moved
Among us in white armor, Galahad.
"God make thee good as thou art
beautiful,"

Said Arthur, when he dubb'd him
knight; and none,
In so young youth, was ever made a
knight
Till Galahad; and this Galahad, when
he heard
My sister's vision, fill'd me with
amaze;
His eyes became so like her own,
they seem'd
Hers, and himself her brother more
than I.

'Sister or brother none had he;
but some
Call'd him a son of Lancelot, and
some said
Begotten by enchantment—chatterers
they,
Like birds of passage piping up and
down,
That gape for flies—we know not
whence they come;
For when was Lancelot wanderingly
lewd?

'But she, the wan sweet maiden,
shore away
Clean from her forehead all that
wealth of hair
Which made a silken mat-work for her
feet;
And out of this she plaited broad and
long
A strong sword-belt, and wove with
silver thread
And crimson in the belt a strange
device,
A crimson grail within a silver beam,
And saw the bright boy-knight, and
bound it on him,
Saying, "My knight, my love, my
knight of heaven,
O thou, my love, whose love is one
with mine,
I, maiden, round thee, maiden, bind
my belt.
Go forth, for thou shalt see what I
have seen,
And break thro' all, till one will crown
thee king
Far in the spiritual city:" and as she
spake

She sent the deathless passion in her
 eyes
 Thro' him, and made him hers, and
 laid her mind
 On him, and he believed in her belief.

'Then came a year of miracle: O
 brother,
 In our great hall there stood a vacant
 chair,
 Fashion'd by Merlin ere he past away,
 And carven with strange figures; and
 in and out
 The figures, like a serpent, ran a scroll
 Of letters in a tongue no man could
 read.
 And Merlin call'd it "The Siege per-
 ilous,"
 Perilous for good and ill; "for there,"
 he said,
 "No man could sit but he should lose
 himself:"
 And once by misadventure Merlin
 sat
 In his own chair, and so was lost;
 but he,
 Galahad, when he heard of Merlin's
 doom,
 Cried, "If I lose myself, I save my-
 self!"

'Then on a summer night it came
 to pass,
 While the great banquet lay along the
 hall,
 That Galahad would sit down in Mer-
 lin's chair.

'And all at once, as there we sat,
 we heard
 A cracking and a riving of the roofs,
 And rending, and a blast, and over-
 head
 Thunder, and in the thunder was a
 cry.
 And in the blast there smote along the
 hall
 A beam of light seven times more
 clear than day:
 And down the long beam stole the
 Holy Grail
 All over cover'd with a luminous
 cloud,

And none might see who bare it, and
 it past.
 But every knight beheld his fellow's
 face
 As in a glory, and all the knights
 arose,
 And staring each at other like dumb
 men
 Stood, till I found a voice and sware
 a vow.

'I sware a vow before them all, that
 I,
 Because I had not seen the Grail,
 would ride
 A twelvemonth and a day in quest of
 it,
 Until I found and saw it, as the
 nun
 My sister saw it; and Galahad sware
 'the vow;
 And good Sir Bors, our Lancelot's
 cousin, sware,
 And Lancelot sware, and many among
 the knights,
 And Gawain sware, and louder than
 the rest.'

Then spake the monk Ambrosius,
 asking him,
 'What said the King? Did Arthur
 take the vow?'

'Nay, for my lord,' said Percivale,
 'the King,
 Was not in hall: for early that same
 day,
 Scaped thro' a cavern from a bandit
 hold,
 An outraged maiden sprang into the
 hall
 Crying on help: for all her shining
 hair
 Was smear'd with earth, and either
 milky arm
 Red-rent with hooks of bramble, and
 all she wore
 Torn as a sail that leaves the rope is
 torn
 In tempest: so the King arose and
 went
 To smoke the scandalous hive of
 those wild bees

That made such honey in his realm.
 Howbeit
 Some little of this marvel he too
 saw,
 Returning o'er the plain that then
 began
 To darken under Camelot; whence
 the King
 Look'd up, calling aloud, "Lo, there!
 the roofs
 Of our great hall are roll'd in thunder-
 smoke!
 Pray Heaven, they be not smitten by
 the bolt."
 For dear to Arthur was that hall of
 ours,
 As having there so oft with all his
 knights
 Feasted, and as the stateliest under
 heaven.

'O brother, had you known our
 mighty hall,
 Which Merlin built for Arthur long
 ago!
 For all the sacred mount of Came-
 lot,
 And all the dim rich city, roof by
 roof,
 Tower after tower, spire beyond spire,
 By grove, and garden-lawn, and rush-
 ing brook,
 Climbs to the mighty hall that Merlin
 built.
 And four great zones of sculpture, set
 betwixt
 With many a mystic symbol, gird the
 hall:
 And in the lowest beasts are slaying
 men,
 And in the second men are slaying
 beasts,
 And on the third are warriors, perfect
 men,
 And on the fourth are men with grow-
 ing wings,
 And over all one statue in the mould
 Of Arthur, made by Merlin, with a
 crown,
 And peak'd wings pointed to the
 Northern Star.
 And eastward fronts the statue, and
 the crown

And both the wings are made of gold,
 and flame
 At sunrise till the people in far fields,
 Wasted so often by the heathen
 hordes,
 Behold it, crying, "We have still a
 King."

'And, brother, had you known our
 hall within,
 Broader and higher than any in all the
 lands!
 Where twelve great windows blazon
 Arthur's wars,
 And all the light that falls upon the
 board
 Streams thro' the twelve great battles
 of our King.
 Nay, one there is, and at the eastern
 end,
 Wealthy with wandering lines of
 mount and mere,
 Where Arthur finds the brand Excali-
 bur.
 And also one to the west, and counter
 to it,
 And blank: and who shall blazon it?
 when and how?—
 O there, perchance, when all our wars
 are done,
 The brand Excalibur will be cast
 away.

'So to this hall full quickly rode the
 King,
 In horror lest the work by Merlin
 wrought,
 Dreamlike, should on the sudden
 vanish, wrapt
 In unremorseful folds of rolling fire.
 And in he rode, and up I glanced, and
 saw
 The golden dragon sparkling over all:
 And many of those who burnt the
 hold, their arms
 Hack'd, and their foreheads grimed
 with smoke, and sear'd,
 Follow'd, and in among bright faces,
 ours,
 Full of the vision, prest: and then
 the King
 Spake to me, being nearest, "Perci-
 vale,"

(Because the hall was all in tumult—
some
Vowing, and some protesting), “what
is this?”

“O brother, when I told him what
had chanced,
My sister’s vision, and the rest, his
face
Darken’d, as I have seen it more than
once,
When some brave deed seem’d to be
done in vain,
Darken; and “Woe is me, my
knights,” he cried,
“Had I been here, ye had not sworn
the vow.”
Bold was mine answer, “Had thyself
been here,
My King, thou wouldst have sworn.”
“Yea, yea,” said he,
“Art thou so bold and hast not seen
the Grail?”

“Nay, lord, I heard the sound, I
saw the light,
But since I did not see the Holy
Thing,
I swear a vow to follow it till I saw.”

“Then when he ask’d us, knight by
knight, if any
Had seen it, all their answers were as
one:
“Nay, lord, and therefore have we
sworn our vows.”

“Lo now,” said Arthur, “have ye
seen a cloud?
What go ye into the wilderness to
see?”

“Then Galahad on the sudden, and
in a voice
Shrilling along the hall to Arthur,
call’d,
“But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy
Grail,
I saw the Holy Grail and heard a
cry—
“O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow
me.”

“Ah, Galahad, Galahad,” said the
King, “for such
As thou art is the vision, not for
these.
Thy holy nun and thou have seen a
sign—
Holier is none, my Percivale, than
she—
A sign to maim this Order which I
made.
But ye, that follow but the leader’s
bell”
(Brother, the King was hard upon his
knights)
“Taliessin is our fullest throat of
song,
And one hath sung and all the dumb
will sing.
Lancelot is Lancelot, and hath over-
borne
Five knights at once, and every
younger knight,
Unproven, holds himself as Lance-
lot,
Till overborne by one, he learns—and
ye,
What are ye? Galahads?—no, nor
Percivales”
(For thus it pleased the King to
range me close
After Sir Galahad); “nay,” said he,
“but men
With strength and will to right the
wrong’d, of power
To lay the sudden heads of violence
flat,
Knights that in twelve great battles
splash’d and dyed
The strong White Horse in his own
heathen blood—
But one hath seen, and all the blind
will see.
Go, since your vows are sacred, being
made:
Yet—for ye know the cries of all my
realm
Pass thro’ this hall—how often, O my
knights,
Your places being vacant at my side,
This chance of noble deeds will come
and go
Unchallenged, while ye follow wan-
dering fires

Lost in the quagmire! Many of you,
yea most;
Return no more: ye think I show
myself
Too dark a prophet: come now, let
us meet
The morrow morn once more in one
full field
Of gracious pastime, that once more
the King,
Before ye leave him for this Quest,
may count
The yet-unbroken strength of all his
knights,
Rejoicing in that Order which he
made."

'So when the sun broke next from
under ground,
All the great table of our Arthur
closed
And clash'd in such a tourney and so
full,
So many lances broken—never yet
Had Camelot seen the like, since
Arthur came;
And I myself and Galahad, for a
strength
Was in us from the vision, overthrew
So many knights that all the people
cried,
And almost burst the barriers in their
heat,
Shouting, "Sir Galahad and Sir Perci-
vale!"

'But when the next day brake from
under ground—
O brother, had you known our Cam-
elot,
Built by old kings, age after age, so
old
The King himself had fears that it
would fall,
So strange, and rich, and dim; for
where the roofs
Totter'd toward each other in the sky,
Met foreheads all along the street of
those
Who watch'd us pass; and lower,
and where the long
Rich galleries, lady-laden, weigh'd the
necks

Of dragons clinging to the crazy walls,
Thicker than drops from thunder,
showers of flowers
Fell as we past; and men and boys
astride
On wyvern, lion, dragon, griffin, swan,
At all the corners, named us each by
name,
Calling "God speed!" but in the
ways below
The knights and ladies wept, and rich
and poor
Wept, and the King himself could
hardly speak
For grief, and all in middle street the
Queen,
Who rode by Lancelot, wail'd and
shriek'd aloud,
"This madness has come on us for
our sins."
So to the Gate of the three Queens
we came,
Where Arthur's wars are render'd
mystically,
And thence departed every one his
way.

'And I was lifted up in heart, and
thought
Of all my late-shown prowess in the
lists,
How my strong lance had beaten
down the knights,
So many and famous names; and
never yet
Had heaven appear'd so blue, nor
earth so green,
For all my blood danced in me, and I
knew
That I should light upon the Holy
Grail.

'Thereafter, the dark warning of
our King,
That most of us would follow wander-
ing fires,
Came like a driving gloom across my
mind.
Then every evil word I had spoken
once,
And every evil thought I had thought
of old,
And every evil deed I ever did,

Awoke and cried, "This Quest is not
for thee."
And lifting up mine eyes, I found my-
self
Alone, and in a land of sand and
thorns,
And I was thirsty even unto death;
And I, too, cried, "This Quest is not
for thee."

'And on I rode, and when I thought
my thirst
Would slay me, saw deep lawns, and
then a brook,
With one sharp rapid, where the crisp-
ing white
Play'd ever back upon the sloping
wave,
And took both ear and eye; and o'er
the brook
Were apple-trees, and apples by the
brook
Fallen, and on the lawns. "I will
rest here,"
I said, "I am not worthy of the
Quest;"
But even while I drank the brook,
and ate
The goodly apples, all these things at
once
Fell into dust, and I was left alone,
And thirsting, in a land of sand and
thorns.

'And then behold a woman at a
door
Spinning; and fair the house whereby
she sat,
And kind the woman's eyes and inno-
cent,
And all her bearing gracious; and she
rose
Opening her arms to meet me, as who
should say,
"Rest here;" but when I touch'd her,
lo! she, too,
Fell into dust and nothing, and the
house
Became no better than a broken
shed,
And in it a dead babe; and also
this
Fell into dust, and I was left alone.

'And on I rode, and greater was
my thirst.
Then flash'd a yellow gleam across
the world,
And where it smote the plowshare in
the field,
The plowman left his plowing, and
fell down
Before it; where it glitter'd on her
pail,
The milkmaid left her milking, and
fell down
Before it, and I knew not why, but
thought
"The sun is rising," tho' the sun had
risen.
Then was I ware of one that on me
moved
In golden armor with a crown of
gold
About a casque all jewels; and his
horse
In golden armor jewell'd everywhere:
And on the splendor came, flashing
me blind;
And seem'd to me the Lord of all the
world,
Being so huge. But when I thought
he meant
To crush me, moving on me, lo! he,
too,
Open'd his arms to embrace me as he
came,
And up I went and touch'd him, and
he, too,
Fell into dust, and I was left alone
And wearying in a land of sand and
thorns.

'And I rode on and found a mighty
hill,
And on the top, a city wall'd: the
spires
Prick'd with incredible pinnacles into
heaven.
And by the gateway stirr'd a crowd;
and these
Cried to me climbing, "Welcome,
Percivale!
Thou mightiest and thou purest
among men!"
And glad was I and clomb, but found
at top

No man, nor any voice. And thence
I past

Far thro' a ruinous city, and I saw
That man had once dwelt there; but
there I found

Only one man of an exceeding age.

"Where is that goodly company,"
said I,

"That so cried out upon me?" and
he had

Scarce any voice to answer, and yet
gasp'd,

"Whence and what art thou?" and
even as he spoke

Fell into dust, and disappear'd, and
I

Was left alone once more, and cried
in grief,

"Lo, if I find the Holy Grail itself
And touch it, it will crumble into
dust."

'And thence I dropt into a lowly
vale,

Low as the hill was high, and where
the vale

Was lowest, found a chapel, and
thereby

A holy hermit in a hermitage,
To whom I told my phantoms, and he
said:

"O son, thou hast not true humil-
ity,

The highest virtue, mother of them
all;

For when the Lord of all things made
Himself

Naked of glory for His mortal change,
'Take thou my robe,' she said, 'for
all is thine,'

And all her form shone forth with
sudden light

So that the angels were amazed, and
she

Follow'd Him down, and like a flying
star

Led on the gray-hair'd wisdom of the
east;

But her thou hast not known: for
what is this

Thou thoughtest of thy prowess and
thy sins?

Thou hast not lost thyself to save thy-
self

As Galahad." When the hermit
made an end,

In silver armor suddenly Galahad
shone

Before us, and against the chapel door
Laid lance, and enter'd, and we knelt

in prayer.

And there the hermit slaked my burn-
ing thirst,

And at the sacring of the mass I
saw

The holy elements alone; but he,
"Saw ye no more? I, Galahad, saw
the Grail,

The Holy Grail, descend upon the
shrine:

I saw the fiery face as of a child
That smote itself into the bread, and
went;

And hither am I come; and never yet
Hath what thy sister taught me first

to see,

This Holy Thing, fail'd from my side,
nor come

Cover'd, but moving with me night
and day,

Fainter by day, but always in the night
Blood-red, and sliding down the
blacken'd marsh

Blood-red, and on the naked moun-
tain top

Blood-red, and in the sleeping mere
below

Blood-red. And in the strength of
this I rode,

Shattering all evil customs every-
where,

And past thro' Pagan realms, and
made them mine,

And clash'd with Pagan hordes, and
bore them down,

And broke thro' all, and in the
strength of this

Come victor. But my time is hard at
hand,

And hence I go; and one will crown
me king

Far in the spiritual city; and come
thou, too,

For thou shalt see the vision when I
go."

'While thus he spake, his eye,
dwelling on mine,
Drew me, with power upon me, till I
grew
One with him, to believe as he
believed.
Then, when the day began to wane,
we went.

'There rose a hill that none but man
could climb,
Scarr'd with a hundred wintry water-
courses—
Storm at the top, and when we gain'd
it, storm
Round us and death; for every
moment glanced
His silver arms and gloom'd: so quick
and thick
The lightnings here and there to left
and right
Struck, till the dry old trunks about
us, dead,
Yea, rotten with a hundred years of
death,
Sprang into fire: and at the base we
found
On either hand, as far as eye could
see,
A great black swamp and of an evil
smell,
Part black, part whiten'd with the
bones of men,
Not to be crost, save that some
ancient king
Had built a way, where, link'd with
many a bridge,
A thousand piers ran into the great
Sea.
And Galahad fled along them bridge
by bridge,
And every bridge as quickly as he
crost
Sprang into fire and vanish'd, tho' I
yearn'd
To follow; and thrice above him all
the heavens
Open'd and blazed with thunder such
as seem'd
Shoutings of all the sons of God:
and first
At once I saw him far on the great
Sea,

In silver-shining armor starry-clear;
And o'er his head the Holy Vessel
hung
Clothed in white samite or a lumi-
nous cloud.
And with exceeding swiftness ran the
boat,
If boat it were—I saw not whence it
came.
And when the heavens open'd and
blazed again
Roaring, I saw him like a silver star—
And had he set the sail, or had the
boat
Become a living creature clad with
wings?
And o'er his head the Holy Vessel
hung
Redder than any rose, a joy to me,
For now I knew the veil had been
withdrawn.
Then in a moment when they blazed
again
Opening, I saw the least of little stars
Down on the waste, and straight
beyond the star
I saw the spiritual city and all her
spires
And gateways in a glory like one
pearl—
No larger, tho' the goal of all the
saints—
Strike from the sea; and from the
star there shot
A rose-red sparkle to the city, and there
Dwelt, and I knew it was the Holy
Grail,
Which never eyes on earth again shall
see.
Then fell the floods of heaven drown-
ing the deep.
And how my feet recrost the deathful
ridge
No memory in me lives; but that I
touch'd
The chapel-doors at dawn I know;
and thence
Taking my war-horse from the holy
man,
Glad that no phantom vexed me more,
return'd
To whence I came, the gate of
Arthur's wars.'

‘O brother,’ ask’d Ambrosius,—‘for
in sooth
These ancient books—and they would
win thee—teem,
Only I find not there this Holy Grail,
With miracles and marvels like to
these,
Not all unlike; which oftentime I
read,
Who read but on my breviary with
ease,
Till my head swims; and then go
forth and pass
Down to the little thorpe that lies so
close,
And almost plaster’d like a martin’s
nest
To these old walls—and mingle with
our folk;
And knowing every honest face of
theirs
As well as ever shepherd knew his
sheep,
And every homely secret in their
hearts,
Delight myself with gossip and old
wives,
And ills and aches, and teethings,
lyings-in,
And mirthful sayings, children of the
place,
That have no meaning half a league
away:
Or lulling random squabbles when
they rise,
Chafferings and chatterings at the
market-cross,
Rejoice, small man, in this small
world of mine,
Yea, even in their hens and in their
eggs—
O brother, saving this Sir Galahad,
Came ye on none but phantoms in
your quest,
No man, no woman?’

Then Sir Percivale:
‘All men, to one so bound by such a
vow,
And women were as phantoms. O,
my brother,
Why wilt thou shame me to confess
to thee

How far I falter’d from my quest and
vow?
For after I had lain so many nights,
A bedmate of the snail and eft and
snake,
In grass and burdock, I was changed
to wan
And meagre, and the vision had not
come;
And then I chanced upon a goodly
town
With one great dwelling in the mid-
dle of it;
Thither I made, and there was I dis-
arm’d
By maidens each as fair as any flower:
But when they led me into hall,
behold,
The Princess of that castle was the
one,
Brother, and that one only, who had
ever
Made my heart leap; for when I
moved of old
A slender page about her father’s
hall,
And she a slender maiden, all my
heart
Went after her with longing: yet we
twain
Had never kiss’d a kiss, or vow’d a
vow.
And now I came upon her, once
again,
And one had wedded her, and he was
dead,
And all his land and wealth and state
were hers.
And while I tarried, every day she
set
A banquet richer than the day be-
fore
By me; for all her longing and her
will
Was toward me as of old; till one
fair morn,
I walking to and fro beside a stream
That flash’d across her orchard
underneath
Her castle-walls, she stole upon my
walk,
And calling me the greatest of all
knights,

Embraced me, and so kiss'd me the
first time,
And gave herself and all her wealth
to me.
Then I remember'd Arthur's warning
word,
That most of us would follow wander-
ing fires,
And the Quest faded in my heart.
Anon,
The heads of all her people drew to
me,
With supplication both of knees and
tongue :
"We have heard of thee: thou art
our greatest knight,
Our lady says it, and we well believe :
Wed thou our Lady, and rule over us,
And thou shalt be as Arthur in our
land."
O me, my brother ! but one night my
vow
Burnt me within, so that I rose and
fled,
But wail'd and wept, and hated mine
own self,
And ev'n the Holy Quest, and all but
her ;
Then after I was join'd with Galahad
Cared not for her, nor anything upon
earth.'

Then said the monk, 'Poor men,
when yule is cold,
Must be content to sit by little fires.
And this am I, so that ye care for
me
Ever so little; yea, and blest be
Heaven
That brought thee here to this poor
house of ours
Where all the brethren are so hard,
to warm
My cold heart with a friend : but O
the pity
To find thine own first love once
more—to hold,
Hold her a wealthy bride within thine
arms,
Or all but hold, and then—cast her
aside,
Foregoing all her sweetness, like a
weed.

For we that want the warmth of
double life,
We that are plagued with dreams of
something sweet
Beyond all sweetness in a life so
rich,—
Ah, blessed Lord, I speak too earthly-
wise,
Seeing I never stray'd beyond the
cell,
But live like an old badger in his
earth,
With earth about him everywhere,
despite
All fast and penance. Saw ye none
beside,
None of your knights?'

'Yea so,' said Percivale :
'One night my pathway swerving
east, I saw
The pelican on the casque of our Sir
Bors
All in the middle of the rising moon :
And toward him spurr'd, and hail'd
him, and he me,
And each made joy of either; then
he ask'd,
"Where is he? hast thou seen him—
Lancelot?—Once,"
Said good Sir Bors, "he dash'd across
me—mad,
And maddening what he rode: and
when I cried,
'Ridest thou then so hotly on a
quest
So holy,' Lancelot shouted, 'Stay me
not!
I have been the sluggard, and I ride
apace,
For now there is a lion in the way.'
So vanish'd."

'Then Sir Bors had ridden on
Softly, and sorrowing for our Lance-
lot,
Because his former madness, once the
talk
And scandal of our table, had re-
turn'd;
For Lancelot's kith and kin so wor-
ship him
That ill to him is ill to them; to Bors

Beyond the rest: he well had been
content
Not to have seen, so Lancelot might
have seen,
The Holy Cup of healing; and, indeed,
Being so clouded with his grief and
love,
Small heart was his after the Holy
Quest:
If God would send the vision, well: if
not,
The Quest and he were in the hands
of Heaven.

‘And then, with small adventure
met, Sir Bors
Rode to the lonest tract of all the
realm,
And found a people there among
their crags,
Our race and blood, a remnant that
were left
Paynim amid their circles, and the
stones
They pitch up straight to heaven: and
their wise men
Were strong in that old magic which
can trace
The wandering of the stars, and
scoff’d at him
And this high Quest as at a simple
thing:
Told him he follow’d—almost Arthur’s
words—
A mocking fire: “what other fire
than he,
Whereby the blood beats, and the
blossom blows,
And the sea rolls, and all the world is
warm’d?”
And when his answer chafed them,
the rough crowd,
Hearing he had a difference with their
priests,
Seized him, and bound and plunged
him into a cell
Of great piled stones; and lying
bounden there
In darkness thro’ innumerable hours
He heard the hollow-ringing heavens
sweep
Over him till by miracle—what else?—

Heavy as it was, a great stone slipt
and fell,
Such as no wind could move: and
thro’ the gap
Glimmer’d the streaming scud: then
came a night
Still as the day was loud; and thro’
the gap
The seven clear stars of Arthur’s
Table Round—
For, brother, so one night, because
they roll
Thro’ such a round in heaven, we
named the stars,
Rejoicing in ourselves and in our
King—
And these, like bright eyes of familiar
friends,
In on him shone: “And then to me,
to me,”
Said good Sir Bors, “beyond all hopes
of mine,
Who scarce had pray’d or ask’d it for
myself—
Across the seven clear stars—O grace
to me—
In color like the fingers of a hand
Before a burning taper, the sweet Grail
Glided and past, and close upon it
peal’d
A sharp quick thunder.” Afterwards,
a maid,
Who kept our holy faith among her
kin
In secret, entering, loosed and let him
go.’

To whom the monk: ‘And I re-
member now
That pelican on the casque: Sir Bors
it was
Who spake so low and sadly at our
board;
And mighty reverent at our grace was
he:
A square-set man and honest; and his
eyes,
An out-door sign of all the warmth
within,
Smiled with his lips—a smile beneath
a cloud,
But heaven had meant it for a sunny
one:

Ay, ay, Sir Bors, who else? But
 when ye reach'd
 The city, found ye all your knights re-
 turn'd,
 Or was there sooth in Arthur's proph-
 ecy,
 Tell me, and what said each, and what
 the King?'

Then answer'd Percivale: 'And
 that can I,
 Brother, and truly; since the living
 words
 Of so great men as Lancelot and our
 King
 Pass not from door to door and out
 again,
 But sit within the house. O, when we
 reach'd
 The city, our horses stumbling as they
 trode
 On heaps of ruin, hornless unicorns,
 Crack'd basilisks, and splinter'd cocka-
 trices,
 And shatter'd talbots, which had left
 the stones
 Raw, that they fell from, brought us
 to the hall.

'And there sat Arthur on the daïs-
 throne,
 And those that had gone out upon the
 Quest,
 Wasted and worn, and but a tithe of
 them,
 And those that had not, stood before
 the King,
 Who, when he saw me, rose, and bad
 me hail,
 Saying, "A welfare in thine eye re-
 proves
 Our fear of some disastrous chance for
 thee
 On hill, or plain, at sea, or flooding
 ford.
 So fierce a gale made havoc here of
 late
 Among the strange devices of our
 kings;
 Yea, shook this newer, stronger hall of
 ours,
 And from the statue Merlin moulded
 for us

Half-wrench'd a golden wing; but
 now—the Quest,
 This vision—hast thou seen the Holy
 Cup,
 That Joseph brought of old to Glas-
 tonbury?"

'So when I told him all thyself hast
 heard,
 Ambrosius, and my fresh but fixt re-
 solve
 To pass away into the quiet life,
 He answer'd not, but, sharply turning,
 ask'd
 Of Gawain, "Gawain, was this Quest
 for thee?"

"Nay, lord," said Gawain, "not
 for such as I.
 Therefore I communed with a saintly
 man,
 Who made me sure the Quest was not
 for me;
 For I was much awearied of the Quest:
 But found a silk pavilion in a field,
 And merry maidens in it; and then
 this gale
 Tore my pavilion from the tenting-pin,
 And blew my merry maidens all
 about
 With all discomfort; yea, and but for
 this,
 My twelvemonth and a day were
 pleasant to me."

'He ceased; and Arthur turn'd to
 whom at first
 He saw not, for Sir Bors, on entering,
 push'd
 Athwart the throng to Lancelot,
 caught his hand,
 Held it, and there, half-hidden by
 him, stood,
 Until the King espied him, saying to
 him,
 "Hail, Bors! if ever loyal man and
 true
 Could see it, thou hast seen the
 Grail;" and Bors,
 "Ask me not, for I may not speak of
 it:
 I saw it;" and the tears were in his
 eyes.

' Then there remain'd but Lance-
lot, for the rest
Spake but of sundry perils in the
storm;
Perhaps, like him of Cana in Holy
Writ,
Our Arthur kept his best until the last;
"Thou, too, my Lancelot," ask'd the
King, "my friend,
Our mightiest, hath this Quest avail'd
for thee?"

"Our mightiest!" answer'd Lance-
lot, with a groan;
"O King!"—and when he paused,
methought I spied
A dying fire of madness in his eyes—
"O King, my friend, if friend of thine
I be,
Happier are those that welter in their
sin,
Swine in the mud, that cannot see for
slime,
Slime of the ditch: but in me lived a
sin
So strange, of such a kind, that all of
pure,
Noble, and knightly in me twined
and clung
Round that one sin, until the whole-
some flower
And poisonous grew together, each
as each,
Not to be pluck'd asunder; and when
thy knights
Sware, I swear with them only in the
hope
That could I touch or see the Holy
Grail
They might be pluck'd asunder.
Then I spake
To one most holy saint, who wept
and said,
That save they could be pluck'd
asunder, all
My quest were but in vain; to whom
I vow'd
That I would work according as he
will'd.
And forth I went, and while I yearn'd
and strove
To tear the twain asunder in my
heart,

My madness came upon me as of old,
And whipt me into waste fields far
away;
There was I beaten down by little
men,
Mean knights, to whom the moving of
my sword
And shadow of my spear had been
enow
To scare them from me once; and
then I came
All in my folly to the naked shore,
Wide flats, where nothing but coarse
grasses grew;
But such a blast, my King, began to
blow,
So loud a blast along the shore and
sea,
Ye could not hear the waters for the
blast,
Tho' heapt in mounds and ridges all
the sea
Drove like a cataract, and all the
sand
Swept like a river, and the clouded
heavens
Were shaken with the motion and the
sound.
And blackening in the sea-foam
sway'd a boat,
Half-swallow'd in it, anchor'd with a
chain;
And in my madness to myself I said,
'I will embark and I will lose myself,
And in the great sea wash away my
sin.'
I burst the chain, I sprang into the
boat.
Seven days I drove along the dreary
deep,
And with me drove the moon and all
the stars;
And the wind fell, and on the seventh
night
I heard the shingle grinding in the
surge,
And felt the boat shock earth, and
looking up,
Behold, the enchanted towers of Car-
bonek,
A castle like a rock upon a rock,
With chasm-like portals open to the
sea,

And steps that met the breaker!
 there was none
 Stood near it but a lion on each side
 That kept the entry, and the moon
 was full.
 Then from the boat I leapt, and up
 the stairs.
 There drew my sword. With sud-
 den-flaring manes
 Those two great beasts rose upright
 like a man,
 Each gript a shoulder, and I stood be-
 tween;
 And, when I would have smitten
 them, heard a voice,
 'Doubt not, go forward; if thou
 doubt, the beasts
 Will tear thee piecemeal.' Then with
 violence
 The sword was dash'd from out my
 hand, and fell.
 And up into the sounding hall I past;
 But nothing in the sounding hall I
 saw,
 No bench nor table, painting on the
 wall
 Or shield of knight; only the rounded
 moon
 Thro' the tall oriel on the rolling sea.
 But always in the quiet house I heard,
 Clear as a lark, high o'er me as a
 lark,
 A sweet voice singing in the topmost
 tower
 To the eastward: up I climb'd a
 thousand steps
 With pain: as in a dream I seem'd to
 climb
 For ever: at the last I reach'd a
 door,
 A light was in the crannies, and I
 heard,
 'Glory and joy and honor to our
 Lord
 And to the Holy Vessel of the Grail.'
 Then in my madness I essay'd the
 door;
 It gave; and thro' a stormy glare, a
 heat
 As from a seventimes-heated furnace,
 I,
 Blasted and burnt, and blinded as I
 was,

With such a fierceness that I swoon'd
 away—
 O, yet methought I saw the Holy Grail,
 All pall'd in crimson samite, and
 around
 Great angels, awful shapes, and wings
 and eyes.
 And but for all my madness and my
 sin,
 And then my swooning, I had sworn
 I saw
 That which I saw; but what I saw
 was veil'd
 And cover'd; and this Quest was not
 for me."

'So speaking, and here ceasing,
 Lancelot left
 The hall long silent, till Sir Gawain—
 nay,
 Brother, I need not tell thee foolish
 words,—
 A reckless and irreverent knight was
 he,
 Now bolden'd by the silence of his
 King,—
 Well, I will tell thee: "O King, my
 liege," he said,
 "Hath Gawain fail'd in any quest of
 thine?
 When have I stinted stroke in
 foughten field?
 But as for thine, my good friend Per-
 cival,
 Thy holy nun and thou have driven
 men mad,
 Yea, made our mightiest madder than
 our least.
 But by mine eyes and by mine ears I
 swear,
 I will be deafer than the blue-eyed
 cat,
 And thrice as blind as any noonday
 owl,
 To holy virgins in their ecstasies,
 Henceforward."

"Deafer," said the blameless
 King,
 "Gawain, and blinder unto holy
 things
 Hope not to make thyself by idle
 vows,

Being too blind to have desire to see.
But if indeed there came a sign from
 heaven,
Blessed are Bors, Lancelot and Percivale,
For these have seen according to their
 sight.
For every fiery prophet in old times,
And all the sacred madness of the
 bard,
When God made music thro' them,
 could but speak
His music by the framework and the
 chord;
And as ye saw it ye have spoken
 truth.

“Nay—but thou errest, Lancelot:
 never yet
Could all of true and noble in knight
 and man
Twine round one sin, whatever it
 might be,
With such a closeness, but apart
 there grew,
Save that he were the swine thou
 spakest of,
Some root of knighthood and pure
 nobleness;
Whereto see thou, that it may bear
 its flower.

“And spake I not too truly, O my
 knights?
Was I too dark a prophet when I
 said
To those who went upon the Holy
 Quest,
That most of them would follow wan-
 dering fires,
Lost in the quagmire?—lost to me
 and gone,
And left me gazing at a barren board,
And a lean Order—scarce return'd a
 tithe—
And out of those to whom the vision
 came
My greatest hardly will believe he
 saw;
Another hath beheld it afar off,
And leaving human wrongs to right
 themselves,
Cares but to pass into the silent life.

And one hath had the vision face to
 face,
And now his chair desires him here in
 vain,
However they may crown him other-
 where.

“And some among you held, that
 if the King
Had seen the sight he would have
 sworn the vow:
Not easily, seeing that the King must
 guard
That which he rules, and is but as the
 hind
To whom a space of land is given to
 plow.
Who may not wander from the allot-
 ted field
Before his work be done; but, being
 done,
Let visions of the night or of the day
Come, as they will; and many a time
 they come,
Until this earth he walks on seems
 not earth,
This light that strikes his eyeball is
 not light,
This air that smites his forehead is
 not air
But vision—yea, his very hand and
 foot—
In moments when he feels he cannot
 die,
And knows himself no vision to him-
 self,
Nor the high God a vision, nor that
 One
Who rose again: ye have seen what
 ye have seen.”

“So spake the King: I knew not
 all he meant.”

PELLEAS AND ETTARRE.

KING ARTHUR made new knights to
 fill the gap
Left by the Holy Quest; and as he sat
In hall at old Caerleon, the high
 doors

Were softly sunder'd, and thro' these
 a youth,
 Pelleas, and the sweet smell of the
 fields
 Past, and the sunshine came along with
 him.

'Make me thy knight, because I
 know, Sir King,
 All that belongs to knighthood, and I
 love.'
 Such was his cry: for having heard
 the King
 Had let proclaim a tournament—the
 prize
 A golden circlet and a knightly
 sword,
 Full fain had Pelleas for his lady won
 The golden circlet, for himself the
 sword:
 And there were those who knew him
 near the King,
 And promised for him: and Arthur
 made him knight.

And this new knight, Sir Pelleas of
 the isles—
 But lately come to his inheritance,
 And lord of many a barren isle was
 he—
 Riding at noon, a day or twain before,
 Across the forest call'd of Dean, to
 find
 Caerleon and the King, had felt the
 sun
 Beat like a strong knight on his helm,
 and reel'd
 Almost to falling from his horse; but
 saw
 Near him a mound of even-sloping
 side,
 Whereon a hundred stately beeches
 grew,
 And here and there great hollies
 under them;
 But for a mile all round was open
 space,
 And fern and heath: and slowly
 Pelleas drew
 To that dim day, then binding his
 good horse
 To a tree, cast himself down; and as
 he lay

At random looking over the brown
 earth
 Thro' that green-glooming twilight of
 the grove,
 It seem'd to Pelleas that the fern
 without
 Burnt as a living fire of emeralds,
 So that his eyes were dazzled looking
 at it.
 Then o'er it crost the dimness of a
 cloud
 Floating, and once the shadow of a
 bird
 Flying, and then a fawn; and his eyes
 closed.
 And since he loved all maidens, but
 no maid
 In special, half-awake he whisper'd,
 'Where?
 O where? I love thee, tho' I know
 thee not.
 For fair thou art and pure as Guin-
 evere,
 And I will make thee with my spear
 and sword
 As famous—O my Queen, my Guin-
 evere,
 For I will be thine Arthur when we
 meet.'

Suddenly waken'd with a sound of
 talk
 And laughter at the limit of the wood,
 And glancing thro' the hoary boles,
 he saw,
 Strange as to some old prophet might
 have seem'd
 A vision hovering on a sea of fire,
 Damsels in divers colors like the
 cloud
 Of sunset and sunrise, and all of them
 On horses, and the horses richly trapt
 Breast-high in that bright line of
 bracken stood:
 And all the damsels talk'd confu-
 sedly,
 And one was pointing this way, and
 one that,
 Because the way was lost.

And Pelleas rose,
 And loosed his horse, and led him to
 the light.

There she that seem'd the chief
among them said,
'In happy time behold our pilot-star!
Youth, we are damsels-errant, and we
ride,
Arm'd as ye see, to tilt against the
knights
There at Caerleon, but have lost our
way:
To right? to left? straight forward?
back again?
Which? tell us quickly.'

Pelleas gazing thought,
'Is Guinevere herself so beautiful?'
For large her violet eyes look'd, and
her bloom
A rosy dawn kindled in stainless
heavens,
And round her limbs, mature in
womanhood;
And slender was her hand and small
her shape;
And but for those large eyes, the
haunts of scorn,
She might have seem'd a toy to trifle
with,
And pass and care no more. But
while he gazed
The beauty of her flesh abash'd the
boy,
As tho' it were the beauty of her soul:
For as the base man, judging of the
good,
Puts his own baseness in him by
default
Of will and nature, so did Pelleas lend
All the young beauty of his own soul
to hers,
Believing her; and when she spake to
him,
Stammer'd, and could not make her a
reply.
For out of the waste islands had he
come,
Where saving his own sisters he had
known
Scarce any but the women of his
isles,
Rough wives, that laugh'd and
scream'd against the gulls,
Makers of nets, and living from the
sea.

Then with a slow smile turn'd the
lady round
And look'd upon her people; and as
when
A stone is flung into some sleeping
tarn,
The circle widens till it lip the
marge,
Spread the slow smile thro' all her
company.
Three knights were thereamong; and
they too smiled,
Scorning him; for the lady was
Ettarre,
And she was a great lady in her land.

Again she said, 'O wild and of the
woods,
Knowest thou not the fashion of our
speech?
Or have the Heavens but given thee a
fair face,
Lacking a tongue?'

'O damsel,' answer'd he,
'I woke from dreams; and coming
out of gloom
Was dazzled by the sudden light,
and crave
Pardon: but will ye to Caerleon? I
Go likewise: shall I lead you to the
King?'

'Lead then,' she said; and thro'
the woods they went.
And while they rode, the meaning in
his eyes,
His tenderness of manner, and chaste
awe,
His broken utterances and bashful-
ness,
Were all a burthen to her, and in her
heart
She mutter'd, 'I have lighted on a
fool,
Raw, yet so stale!' But since her
mind was bent
On hearing, after trumpet blown, her
name
And title, 'Queen of Beauty,' in the
lists
Cried—and beholding him so strong,
she thought

That peradventure he will fight for
me,
And win the circlet: therefore flatter'd
him,
Being so gracious, that he wellnigh
deem'd
His wish by hers was echo'd; and her
knights
And all her damsels too were gracious
to him,
For she was a great lady.

And when they reach'd
Caerleon, ere they past to lodging,
she,
Taking his hand, 'O the strong hand,'
she said,
'See! look at mine! but wilt thou
fight for me,
And win me this fine circlet, Pel-
leas,
That I may love thee?'

Then his helpless heart
Leapt, and he cried, 'Ay! wilt thou if
I win?'
'Ay, that will I,' she answer'd, and
she laugh'd,
And straitly nipt the hand, and flung
it from her;
Then glanced askew at those three
knights of hers,
Till all her ladies laugh'd along with
her.

'O happy world,' thought Pelleas,
'all, meseems,
Are happy; I the happiest of them
all.'
Nor slept that night for pleasure in his
blood,
And green wood-ways, and eyes among
the leaves;
Then being on the morrow knighted,
sware
To love one only. And as he came
away,
The men who met him rounded on
their heels
And wonder'd after him, because his
face
Shone like the countenance of a priest
of old

Against the flame about a sacrifice
Kindled by fire from heaven: so glad
was he.

Then Arthur made vast banquets,
and strange knights
From the four winds came in: and
each one sat,
Tho' served with choice from air,
land, stream, and sea,
Oft in mid-banquet measuring with his
eyes
His neighbor's make and might: and
Pelleas look'd
Noble among the noble, for he
dream'd
His lady loved him, and he knew him-
self
Loved of the King: and him his new-
made knight
Worshipt, whose lightest whisper
moved him more
Than all the ranged reasons of the
world.

Then blush'd and brake the morn-
ing of the jousts,
And this was call'd 'The Tournament
of Youth: '
For Arthur, loving his young knight,
withheld
His older and his mightier from the
lists,
That Pelleas might obtain his lady's
love,
According to her promise, and re-
main
Lord of the tourney. And Arthur had
the jousts
Down in the flat field by the shore of
Usk
Holden: the gilded parapets were
crown'd
With faces, and the great tower fill'd
with eyes
Up to the summit, and the trumpets
blew.
There all day long Sir Pelleas kept the
field
With honor: so by that strong hand
of his
The sword and golden circlet were
achieved.

Then rang the shout his lady loved :
 the heat
 Of pride and glory fired her face ; her
 eye
 Sparkled ; she caught the circlet from
 his lance,
 And there before the people crown'd
 herself :
 So for the last time she was gracious
 to him.

Then at Caerleon for a space—her
 look
 Bright for all others, cloudier on her
 knight—
 Linger'd Ettarre : and seeing Pelleas
 droop,
 Said Guinevere, ' We marvel at thee
 much,
 O damsel, wearing this unsunny face
 To him who won thee glory ! ' And
 she said,
 ' Had ye not held your Lancelot in
 your bower,
 My Queen, he had not won.' Where-
 at the Queen,
 As one whose foot is bitten by an
 ant,
 Glanced down upon her, turn'd and
 went her way.

But after, when her damsels, and
 herself,
 And those three knights all set their
 faces home,
 Sir Pelleas follow'd. She that saw
 him cried,
 ' Damsels—and yet I should be
 shamed to say it—
 I cannot bide Sir Baby. Keep him
 back
 Among yourselves. Would rather
 that we had
 Some rough old knight who knew the
 worldly way,
 Albeit grizzlier than a bear, to ride
 And jest with : take him to you, keep
 him off,
 And pamper him with papmeat, if ye
 will,
 Old milky fables of the wolf and sheep,
 Such as the wholesome mothers tell
 their boys.

Nay, should ye try him with a merry
 one
 To find his mettle, good : and if he fly
 us,
 Small matter ! let him.' This her
 damsels heard,
 And mindful of her small and cruel
 hand,
 They, closing round him thro' the
 journey home,
 Acted her hest, and always from her
 side
 Restrained him with all manner of de-
 vice,
 So that he could not come to speech
 with her.
 And when she gain'd her castle,
 upsprang the bridge,
 Down rang the grate of iron thro' the
 groove,
 And he was left alone in open field.

' These be the ways of ladies,'
 Pelleas thought,
 ' To those who love them, trials of our
 faith.
 Yea, let her prove me to the utter-
 most,
 For loyal to the uttermost am I.'
 So made his moan ; and, darkness
 falling, sought
 A priory not far off, there lodged, but
 rose
 With morning every day, and, moist or
 dry,
 Full-arm'd upon his charger all day
 long
 Sat by the walls, and no one open'd to
 him.

And this persistence turn'd her
 scorn to wrath.
 Then calling her three knights, she
 charged them, ' Out !
 And drive him from the walls.' And
 out they came,
 But Pelleas overthrew them as they
 dash'd
 Against him one by one ; and these
 return'd,
 But still he kept his watch beneath
 the wall.

Thereon her wrath became a hate;
 and once,
 A week beyond, while walking on the
 walls
 With her three knights, she pointed
 downward, 'Look,
 He haunts me—I cannot breathe—
 besieges me;
 Down! strike him! put my hate into
 your strokes,
 And drive him from my walls.' And
 down they went,
 And Pelleas overthrew them one by
 one;
 And from the tower above him cried
 Ettarre,
 'Bind him and bring him in.'

He heard her voice;
 Then let the strong hand, which had
 overthrown
 Her minion-knights, by those he over-
 threw
 Be bounden straight, and so they
 brought him in.

Then when he came before Ettarre,
 the sight
 Of her rich beauty made him at one
 glance
 More bondsman in his heart than in
 his bonds.
 Yet with good cheer he spake,
 'Behold me, Lady,
 A prisoner, and the vassal of thy will;
 And if thou keep me in thy donjon
 here,
 Content am I so that I see thy face
 But once a day: for I have sworn my
 vows,
 And thou hast given thy promise, and
 I know
 That all these pains are trials of my
 faith,
 And that thyself, when thou hast seen
 me strain'd
 And sifted to the utmost, wilt at length
 Yield me thy love and know me for
 thy knight.'

Then she began to rail so bitterly,
 With all her damsels, he was stricken
 mute;

But when she mock'd his vows and
 the great King,
 Lighted on words: 'For pity of thine
 own self,
 Peace, Lady, peace: is he not thine
 and mine?'
 'Thou fool,' she said, 'I never heard
 his voice
 But long'd to break away. Unbind
 him now,
 And thrust him out of doors; for save
 he be
 Fool to the midmost marrow of his
 bones,
 He will return no more.' And those,
 her three,
 Laugh'd, and unbound, and thrust him
 from the gate.

And after this, a week beyond,
 again
 She call'd them, saying, 'There he
 watches yet,
 There like a dog before his master's
 door!
 Kick'd, he returns: do ye not hate
 him, ye?
 Ye know yourselves: how can ye bide
 at peace,
 Affronted with his fulsome innocence?
 Are ye but creatures of the board and
 bed,
 No men to strike? Fall on him all at
 once,
 And if ye slay him I reckon not: if ye
 fail,
 Give ye the slave mine order to be
 bound,
 Bind him as heretofore, and bring
 him in:
 It may be ye shall slay him in his
 bonds.'

She spake; and at her will they
 couch'd their spears,
 Three against one: and Gawain pass-
 ing by,
 Bound upon solitary adventure, saw
 Low down beneath the shadow of those
 towers
 A villainy, three to one: and thro' his
 heart
 The fire of honor and all noble deeds



"THE AMOIGHTY'S A TAAKING O YOU TO 'ISSEN."—*Page 100.*

Flash'd, and he call'd, 'I strike upon
thy side—
The caitiffs!' 'Nay,' said Pelleas,
'but forbear;
He needs no aid who doth his lady's
will.'

So Gawain, looking at the villainy
done,
Forbore, but in his heat and eagerness
Trembled and quiver'd, as the dog,
withheld
A moment from the vermin that he
sees
Before him, shivers, ere he springs and
kills.

And Pelleas overthrew them, one to
three;
And they rose up, and bound, and
brought him in.
Then first her anger, leaving Pelleas,
burn'd
Full on her knights in many an evil
name
Of craven, weakling, and thrice-beaten
hound:
'Yet, take him, ye that scarce are fit
to touch,
Far less to bind, your victor, and
thrust him out,
And let who will release him from his
bonds.
And if he comes again'—there she
brake short;
And Pelleas answer'd, 'Lady, for
indeed
I loved you and I deem'd you beauti-
ful,
I cannot brook to see your beauty
marr'd
Thro' evil spite: and if ye love me
not,
I cannot bear to dream you so for-
sworn:
I had liefer ye were worthy of my
love,
Than to be loved again of you—fare-
well;
And tho' ye kill my hope, not yet my
love,
Vex not yourself: ye will not see me
more.'

While thus he spake, she gazed
upon the man
Of princely bearing, tho' in bonds,
and thought,
'Why have I push'd him from me?
this man loves,
If love there be: yet him I loved not.
Why?
I deem'd him fool? yea, so? or that
in him
A something—was it nobler than my-
self?—
Seem'd my reproach? He is not of
my kind.
He could not love me, did he know
me well.
Nay, let him go—and quickly.' And
her knights
Laugh'd not, but thrust him bounden
out of door.

Forth sprang Gawain, and loosed
him from his bonds,
And flung them o'er the walls; and
afterward,
Shaking his hands, as from a lazar's
rag,
'Faith of my body,' he said, 'and art
thou not—
Yea thou art he, whom late our Arthur
made
Knight of his table; yea and he that
won
The circlet? wherefore hast thou so
defamed
Thy brotherhood in me and all the
rest,
As let these caitiffs on thee work their
will?'

And Pelleas answer'd, 'O, their
wills are hers
For whom I won the circlet; and
mine, hers,
Thus to be bounden, so to see her face,
Marr'd tho' it be with spite and mock-
ery now,
Other than when I found her in the
woods;
And tho' she hath me bounden but in
spite,
And all to flout me, when they bring
me in,

Let me be bounden, I shall see her
face;
Else must I die thro' mine unhappi-
ness.'

And Gawain answer'd kindly tho' in
scorn,
'Why, let my lady bind me if she
will,
And let my lady beat me if she
will:
But an she send her delegate to thrall
These fighting hands of mine—Christ
kill me then
But I will slice him handless by the
wrist,
And let my lady sear the stump for
him,
Howl as he may. But hold me for
your friend:
Come, ye know nothing: here I pledge
my troth,
Yea, by the honor of the Table
Round,
I will be leal to thee and work thy
work,
And tame thy jailing princess to thine
hand.
Lend me thine horse and arms, and I
will say
That I have slain thee. She will let
me in
To hear the manner of thy fight and
fall;
Then, when I come within her
counsels, then
From prime to vespers will I chant
thy praise
As prowtest knight and truest lover,
more
Than any have sung thee living, till
she long
To have thee back in lusty life again,
Not to be bound, save by white bonds
and warm,
Dearer than freedom. Wherefore
now thy horse
And armor: let me go: be com-
forted:
Give me three days to melt her fancy,
and hope
The third night hence will bring thee
news of gold.'

Then Pelleas lent his horse and all
his arms,
Saving the goodly sword, his prize,
and took
Gawain's, and said, 'Betray me not,
but help—
Art thou not he whom men call light-
of-love?'

'Ay,' said Gawain, 'for women be so
light.'
Then bounded forward to the castle
walls,
And raised a bugle hanging from his
neck,
And winded it, and that so music-
ally
That all the old echoes hidden in the
wall
Rang out like hollow woods at hunt-
ing-tide.

Up ran a score of damsels to the
tower;
'Avaunt,' they cried, 'our lady loves
thee not.'
But Gawain lifting up his vizor said,
'Gawain am I, Gawain of Arthur's
court,
And I have slain this Pelleas whom
ye hate:
Behold his horse and armor. Open
gates,
And I will make you merry.'

And down they ran,
Her damsels, crying to their lady,
'Lo!
Pelleas is dead—he told us—he that
hath
His horse and armor: will ye let him
in?
He slew him! Gawain, Gawain of
the court,
Sir Gawain—there he waits below the
wall,
Blowing his bugle as who should say
him nay.'

And so, leave given, straight on thro'
open door
Rode Gawain, whom she greeted
courteously.

'Dead, is it so?' she ask'd. 'Ay,
ay,' said he,
'And oft in dying cried upon your
name.'
'Pity on him,' she answer'd, 'a good
knight,
But never let me bide one hour at
peace.'
'Ay,' thought Gawain, 'and you be
fair enow:
But I to your dead man have given
my troth,
That whom ye loathe, him will I
make you love.'

So those three days, aimless about
the land,
Lost in a doubt, Pelleas wandering
Waited, until the third night brought
a moon
With promise of large light on woods
and ways.

Hot was the night and silent; but a
sound
Of Gawain ever coming, and this
lay—
Which Pelleas had heard sung before
the Queen,
And seen her sadden listening—vext
his heart,
And marr'd his rest—'A worm within
the rose.'

'A rose, but one, none other rose
had I,
A rose, one rose, and this was won-
drous fair,
One rose, a rose that gladden'd earth
and sky,
One rose, my rose, that sweeten'd all
mine air—
I cared not for the thorns; the thorns
were there.

'One rose, a rose to gather by and
by,
One rose, a rose, to gather and to
wear,
No rose but one—what other rose
had I?
One rose, my rose; a rose that will
not die,—

He dies who loves it,—if the worm be
there.'

This tender rhyme, and evermore the
doubt,
'Why lingers Gawain with his golden
news?'
So shook him that he could not rest,
but rode
Ere midnight to her walls, and bound
his horse
Hard by the gates. Wide open were
the gates,
And no watch kept; and in thro'
these he past,
And heard but his own steps, and his
own heart
Beating, for nothing moved but his
own self,
And his own shadow. Then he crost
the court,
And spied not any light in hall or
bower,
But saw the postern portal also wide
Yawning; and up a slope of garden,
all
Of roses white and red, and brambles
mixt
And overgrowing them, went on, and
found,
Here too, all hush'd below the mellow
moon,
Save that one rivulet from a tiny
cave
Came lightening downward, and so
spilt itself
Among the roses, and was lost again.

Then was he ware of three pavilions
rear'd
Above the bushes, gilden-peak't: in
one,
Red after revel, droned her lurdane
knights
Slumbering, and their three squires
across their feet:
In one, their malice on the placid lip
Froz'n by sweet sleep, four of her
damsels lay:
And in the third, the circlet of the
jousts
Bound on her brow, were Gawain and
Ettarre.

Back, as a hand that pushes thro'
 the leaf
 To find a nest and feels a snake, he
 drew:
 Back, as a coward slinks from what he
 fears
 To cope with, or a traitor proven, or
 hound
 Beaten, did Pelleas in an utter
 shame
 Creep with his shadow thro' the court
 again,
 Fingering at his sword-handle until
 he stood
 There on the castle-bridge once more,
 and thought,
 'I will go back, and slay them where
 they lie.'

And so went back and seeing them
 yet in sleep
 Said, 'Ye, that so dishallow the holy
 sleep,
 Your sleep is death,' and drew the
 sword, and thought,
 'What! slay a sleeping knight? the
 King hath bound
 And sworn me to this brother-
 hood;' again,
 'Alas that ever a knight should be so
 false.'
 Then turn'd, and so return'd, and
 groaning laid
 The naked sword athwart their naked
 throats,
 There left it, and them sleeping; and
 she lay,
 The circlet of the tourney round her
 brows,
 And the sword of the tourney across
 her throat.

And forth he past, and mounting on
 his horse
 Stared at her towers that, larger than
 themselves
 In their own darkness, throng'd into
 the moon.
 Then crush'd the saddle with his
 thighs, and clench'd
 His hands, and madden'd with him-
 self and moan'd:

'Would they have risen against me
 in their blood
 At the last day? I might have an-
 swer'd them
 Even before high God. O towers so
 strong,
 Huge, solid, would that even while I
 gaze
 The crack of earthquake shivering
 to your base
 Split you, and Hell burst up your
 harlot roofs
 Bellowing, and charr'd you thro' and
 thro' within,
 Black as the harlot's heart—hollow
 as a skull!
 Let the fierce east scream thro' your
 eyelet-holes,
 And whirl the dust of harlots round
 and round
 In dung and nettles! hiss, snake—I
 saw him there—
 Let the fox bark, let the wolf yell.
 Who yells
 Here in the still sweet summer night,
 but I—
 I, the poor Pelleas whom she call'd
 her fool?
 Fool, beast—he, she, or I? myself
 most fool;
 Beast too, as lacking human wit—
 disgraced,
 Dishonor'd all for trial of true love--
 Love? we be all alike: only the
 King
 Hath made us fools and liars. O
 noble vows!
 O great and sane and simple race of
 brutes
 That own no lust because they have
 no law!
 For why should I have loved her to
 my shame?
 I loathe her, as I loved her to my
 shame.
 I never loved her, I but lusted for
 her—
 Away—'

He dash'd the rowel into his
 horse,
 And bounded forth and vanish'd thro'
 the night.

Then she, that felt the cold touch
on her throat,
Awaking knew the sword, and turn'd
herself
To Gawain: 'Liar, for thou hast not
slain
This Pelleas! here he stood, and might
have slain
Me and thyself.' And he that tells
the tale
Says that her ever-veering fancy
turn'd
To Pelleas, as the one true knight on
earth,
And only lover; and thro' her love
her life
Wasted and pined, desiring him in
vain.

But he by wild and way, for half
the night,
And over hard and soft, striking the
sod
From out the soft, the spark from off
the hard,
Rode till the star above the wakening
sun,
Beside that tower where Percivale
was cowl'd,
Glanced from the rosy forehead of the
dawn.
For so the words were flash'd into his
heart
He knew not whence or wherefore: 'O
sweet star,
Pure on the virgin forehead of the
dawn!'
And there he would have wept, but
felt his eyes
Harder and drier than a fountain
bed
In summer: thither came the village
girls
And linger'd talking, and they come
no more
Till the sweet heavens have fill'd it
from the heights
Again with living waters in the
change
Of seasons: hard his eyes; harder
his heart
Seem'd; but so weary were his
limbs, that he,

Gasping, 'Of Arthur's hall am I, but
here,
Here let me rest and die,' cast him-
self down,
And gulf'd his griefs in inmost sleep;
so lay,
Till shaken by a dream, that Gawain
fired
The hall of Merlin, and the morning
star
Reel'd in the smoke, brake into
flame, and fell.

He woke, and being ware of some
one nigh,
Sent hands upon him, as to tear him,
crying,
'False! and I held thee pure as
Guinevere.'

But Percivale stood near him and
replied,
'Am I but false as Guinevere is pure?
Or art thou mazed with dreams? or
being one
Of our free-spoken Table hast not
heard
That Lancelot—there he check'd
himself and paused.

Then fared it with Sir Pelleas as
with one
Who gets a wound in battle, and the
sword
That made it plunges thro' the wound
again,
And pricks it deeper: and he shrank
and wail'd,
'Is the Queen false?' and Percivale
was mute.
'Have any of our Round Table held
their vows?'
And Percivale made answer not a
word.
'Is the King true?' 'The King!'
said Percivale.
'Why then let men couple at once
with wolves.
What! art thou mad?'

But Pelleas, leaping up,
Ran thro' the doors and vaulted on his
horse

And fled: small pity upon his horse
 had he,
 Or on himself, or any, and when he
 met
 A cripple, one that held a hand for
 alms—
 Hunch'd as he was, and like an old
 dwarf-elm
 That turns its back on the salt blast,
 the boy
 Paused not, but overrode him, shout-
 ing, 'False,
 And false with Gawain!' and so left
 him bruised
 And batter'd, and fled on, and hill
 and wood
 Went ever streaming by him till the
 gloom,
 That follows on the turning of the
 world,
 Darken'd the common path: he
 twitch'd the reins,
 And made his beast that better knew
 it, swerve
 Now off it and now on; but when he
 saw
 High up in Heaven the hall that
 Merlin built,
 Blackening against the dead-green
 stripes of even,
 'Black nest of rats,' he groan'd 'ye
 build too high.'

Not long thereafter from the city
 gates
 Issued Sir Lancelot riding airily,
 Warm with a gracious parting from
 the Queen,
 Peace at his heart, and gazing at a star
 And marvelling what it was: on whom
 the boy,
 Across the silent seeded meadow-
 grass
 Borne, clash'd: and Lancelot, saying,
 'What name hast thou
 That ridest here so blindly and so
 hard?'
 'No name, no name,' he shouted, 'a
 scourge am I
 To lash the treasons of the Table
 Round.'
 'Yea, but thy name?' 'I have many
 names,' he cried:

'I am wrath and shame and hate and
 evil fame,
 And like a poisonous wind I pass to
 blast
 And blaze the crime of Lancelot and
 the Queen.'
 'First over me,' said Lancelot, 'shalt
 thou pass.'
 'Fight therefore,' yell'd the youth,
 and either knight
 Drew back a space, and when they
 closed, at once
 The weary steed of Pelleas flounder-
 ing flung
 His rider, who call'd out from the
 dark field,
 'Thou art false as Hell: slay me: I
 have no sword.'
 Then Lancelot, 'Yea, between thy
 lips—and sharp;
 But here will I disedge it by thy
 death.'
 'Slay then,' he shriek'd, 'my will is to
 be slain.'
 And Lancelot, with his heel upon the
 fall'n,
 Rolling his eyes, a moment stood,
 then spake:
 'Rise, weakling; I am Lancelot; say
 thy say.'

And Lancelot slowly rode his war-
 horse back
 To Camelot, and Sir Pelleas in brief
 while
 Caught his unbroken limbs from the
 dark field,
 And follow'd to the city. It chanced
 that both
 Brake into hall together, worn and
 pale.
 There with her knights and dames
 was Guinevere.
 Full wonderingly she gazed on Lance-
 lot
 So soon return'd, and then on Pelleas,
 him
 Who had not greeted her, but cast
 himself
 Down on a bench, hard-breathing.
 'Have ye fought?'
 She ask'd of Lancelot. 'Ay, my
 Queen,' he said.

‘And thou hast overthrown him?’
 ‘Ay, my Queen.’
 Then she, turning to Pelleas, ‘O
 young knight,
 Hath the great heart of knighthood
 in thee fail’d
 So far thou canst not bide, unfro-
 wardly,
 A fall from *him*?’ Then, for he an-
 swer’d not,
 ‘Or hast thou other griefs? If I, the
 Queen,
 May help them, loose thy tongue, and
 let me know.’
 But Pelleas lifted up an eye so fierce
 She quail’d; and he, hissing ‘I have
 no sword,’
 Sprang from the door into the dark.
 The Queen
 Look’d hard upon her lover, he on
 her:
 And each foresaw the dolorous day to
 be:
 And all talk died, as in a grove all
 song
 Beneath the shadow of some bird of
 prey;
 Then a long silence came upon the
 hall,
 And Modred thought, ‘The time is
 hard at hand.’

THE LAST TOURNAMENT.

DAGONET, the fool, whom Gawain in
 his mood
 Had made mock-knight of Arthur’s
 Table Round,
 At Camelot, high above the yellowing
 woods,
 Danced like a wither’d leaf before the
 hall.
 And toward him from the hall, with
 harp in hand,
 And from the crown thereof a carca-
 net
 Of ruby swaying to and fro, the
 prize
 Of Tristram in the jousts of yester-
 day,
 Came Tristram, saying, ‘Why skip ye
 so, Sir Fool!’

For Arthur and Sir Lancelot riding
 once
 Far down beneath a winding wall of
 rock
 Heard a child wail. A stump of oak
 half-dead,
 From roots like some black coil of
 carven snakes,
 Clutch’d at the crag, and started thro’
 mid air
 Bearing an eagle’s nest: and thro’ the
 tree
 Rush’d ever a rainy wind, and thro’
 the wind
 Pierced ever a child’s cry: and crag
 and tree
 Scaling, Sir Lancelot from the peril-
 ous nest,
 This ruby necklace thrice around her
 neck,
 And all unscarr’d from beak or talon,
 brought
 A maiden babe; which Arthur pitying
 took,
 Then gave it to his Queen to rear:
 the Queen
 But coldly acquiescing, in her white
 arms
 Received, and after loved it tenderly,
 And named it Nestling; so forgot
 herself
 A moment, and her cares; till that
 young life
 Being smitten in mid heaven with
 mortal cold
 Past from her; and in time the carca-
 net
 Vext her with plaintive memories of
 the child:
 So she, delivering it to Arthur, said,
 ‘Take thou the jewels of this dead in-
 nocence,
 And make them, an thou wilt, a tour-
 ney-prize.’

To whom the King, ‘Peace to thine
 eagle-borne
 Dead nestling, and this honor after
 death,
 Following thy will! but, O my Queen,
 I muse
 Why ye not wear on arm, or neck, or
 zone

Those diamonds that I rescued from
the tarn,
And Lancelot won, methought, for
thee to wear.'

'Would rather you had let them
fall,' she cried,
'Plunge and be lost—ill-fated as they
were,
A bitterness to me!—ye look amazed,
Not knowing they were lost as soon
as given—
Slid from my hands, when I was lean-
ing out
Above the river—that unhappy child
Past in her barge: but rosier luck will
go
With these rich jewels, seeing that
they came
Not from the skeleton of a brother-
slayer,
But the sweet body of a maiden babe.
Perchance—who knows?—the purest
of thy knights
May win them for the purest of my
maids.'

She ended, and the cry of a great
jousts
With trumpet-blowings ran on all the
ways
From Camelot in among the faded
fields
To furthest towers; and everywhere
the knights
Arm'd for a day of glory before the
King.

But on the hither side of that loud
morn
Into the hall stagger'd, his visage
ribb'd
From ear to ear with dogwhip-weals,
his nose
Bridge-broken, one eye out, and one
hand off,
And one with shatter'd fingers dan-
gling lame,
A churl, to whom indignantly the
King,

'My churl, for whom Christ died,
what evil beast

Hath drawn his claws athwart thy
face? or fiend?
Man was it who marr'd heaven's im-
age in thee thus?'

Then, sputtering thro' the hedge of
splinter'd teeth,
Yet strangers to the tongue, and with
blunt stump
Pitch-blacken'd sawing the air, said
the maim'd churl,

'He took them and he drave them
to his tower—
Some hold he was a table-knight of
thine—
A hundred goodly ones—the Red
Knight, he—
Lord, I was tending swine, and the
Red Knight
Brake in upon me and drave them to
his tower;
And when I call'd upon thy name as
one
That doest right by gentle and by
churl,
Maim'd me and maul'd, and would
outright have slain,
Save that he sware me to a message,
saying,
"Tell thou the King and all his liars,
that I
Have founded my Round Table in the
North,
And whatsoever his own knights have
sworn
My knights have sworn the counter to
it—and say
My tower is full of harlots, like his
court,
But mine are worthier, seeing they
profess
To be none other than themselves—
and say
My knights are all adulterers like his
own,
But mine are truer, seeing they pro-
fess
To be none other; and say his hour
is come,
The heathen are upon him, his long
lance
Broken, and his Excalibur a straw."'

Then Arthur turn'd to Kay the
seneschal,
'Take thou my churl, and tend him
curiously
Like a king's heir, till all his hurts be
whole.
The heathen—but that ever-climbing
wave,
Hurl'd back again so often in empty
foam,
Hath lain for years at rest—and rene-
gades,
Thieves, bandits, leavings of confu-
sion, whom
The wholesome realm is purged of
otherwhere,
Friends, thro' your manhood and your
fēalty,—now
Make their last head like Satan in the
North.
My younger knights, new-made, in
whom your flower
Waits to be solid fruit of golden
deeds,
Move with me toward their quelling,
which achieved,
The loneliest ways are safe from
shore to shore.
But thou, Sir Lancelot, sitting in my
place
Enchair'd to-morrow, arbitrate the
field;
For wherefore shouldst thou care to
mingle with it,
Only to yield my Queen her own
again?
Speak, Lancelot, thou art silent: is it
well?'

Thereto Sir Lancelot answer'd, 'It
is well:
Yet better if the King abide, and leave
The leading of his younger knights to
me.
Else, for the King has will'd it, it is
well.'

Then Arthur rose and Lancelot fol-
low'd him,
And while they stood without the
doors, the King
Turn'd to him saying, 'Is it then so
well?'

Or mine the blame that oft I seem as
he
Of whom was written, "A sound is in
his ears"?
The foot that loiters, bidden go,—the
glance
That only seems half-loyal to com-
mand,—
A manner somewhat fall'n from rever-
ence—
Or have I dream'd the bearing of our
knights
Tells of a manhood ever less and
lower?
Or whence the fear lest this my realm,
uprear'd,
By noble deeds at one with noble
vows,
From flat confusion and brute vio-
lences,
Reel back into the beast, and be no
more?'

He spoke, and taking all his
younger knights,
Down the slope city rode, and sharply
turn'd
North by the gate. In her high
bower the Queen,
Working a tapestry, lifted up her head,
Watch'd her lord pass, and knew not
that she sigh'd.
Then ran across her memory the
strange rhyme
Of bygone Merlin, 'Where is he who
knows?
From the great deep to the great
deep he goes.'

But when the morning of a tour-
nament,
By these in earnest those in mockery
call'd
The Tournament of the Dead Inno-
cence,
Brake with a wet wind blowing, Lan-
celot,
Round whose sick head all night, like
birds of prey,
The words of Arthur flying shriek'd,
arose,
And down a streetway hung with
folds of pure

White samite, and by fountains running wine,
Where children sat in white with cups of gold,
Moved to the lists, and there, with slow sad steps
Ascending, fill'd his double-dragon'd chair.

He glanced and saw the stately galleries,
Dame, damsel, each thro' worship of their Queen
White-robed in honor of the stainless child,
And some with scatter'd jewels, like a bank
Of maiden snow mingled with sparks of fire.
He look'd but once, and vail'd his eyes again.

The sudden trumpet sounded as in a dream
To ears but half-awaked, then one low roll
Of Autumn thunder, and the jousts began:
And ever the wind blew, and yellowing leaf
And gloom and gleam, and shower and shorn plume
Went down it. Sighing weariedly, as one
Who sits and gazes on a faded fire,
When all the goodlier guests are past away,
Sat their great umpire, looking o'er the lists.
He saw the laws that ruled the tournament
Broken, but spake not; once, a knight cast down
Before his throne of arbitration cursed
The dead babe and the follies of the King;
And once the laces of a helmet crack'd,
And show'd him, like a vermin in its hole,
Modred, a narrow face: anon he heard
The voice that billow'd round the barriers roar

An ocean-sounding welcome to one knight,
But newly-enter'd, taller than the rest,
And armor'd all in forest green, whereon
There tript a hundred tiny silver deer,
And wearing but a holly-spray for crest,
With ever-scattering berries, and on shield
A spear, a harp, a bugle—Tristram—late
From overseas in Brittany return'd,
And marriage with a princess of that realm,
Isolt the White—Sir Tristram of the Woods—
Whom Lancelot knew, had held sometime with pain
His own against him, and now yearn'd to shake
The burthen off his heart in one full shock
With Tristram ev'n to death: his strong hands gript
And dinted the gilt dragons right and left,
Until he groan'd for wrath—so many of those,
That ware their ladies' colors on the casque,
Drew from before Sir Tristram to the bounds,
And there with gibes and flickering mockeries
Stood, while he mutter'd, 'Craven crests! O shame!
What faith have these in whom they swear to love?
The glory of our Round Table is no more.'

So Tristram won, and Lancelot gave, the gems,
Not speaking other word than 'Hast thou won?
Art thou the purest, brother? See, the hand
Wherewith thou takest this, is red!' to whom
Tristram, half plagued by Lancelot's languorous mood,

Made answer, 'Ay, but wherefore toss
me this
Like a dry bone cast to some hungry
hound?
Let be thy fair Queen's fantasy.
Strength of heart
And might of limb, but mainly use
and skill,
Are winners in this pastime of our
King.
My hand—belike the lance hath dript
upon it—
No blood of mine, I trow; but O
chief knight,
Right arm of Arthur in the battlefield,
Great brother, thou nor I have made
the world;
Be happy in thy fair Queen as I in
mine.'

And Tristram round the gallery
made his horse
Caracole; then bow'd his homage,
bluntly saying,
'Fair damsels, each to him who wor-
ships each
Sole Queen of Beauty and of love, be-
hold
This day my Queen of Beauty is not
here.'
And most of these were mute, some
anger'd, one
Murmuring, 'All courtesy is dead,'
and one,
'The glory of our Round Table is no
more.'

Then fell thick rain, plume droopt
and mantle clung,
And pettish cries awoke, and the wan
day
Went glooming down in wet and
weariness:
But under her black brows a swarthy
one
Laugh'd shrilly, crying, 'Praise the
patient saints,
Our one white day of Innocence hath
past,
Tho' somewhat draggled at the skirt.
So be it.
The snowdrop only, flowering thro'
the year,

Would make the world as blank as
Winter-tide.
Come—let us gladden their sad eyes,
our Queen's
And Lancelot's, at this night's so-
lemnity
With all the kindlier colors of the
field.'

So dame and damsel glitter'd at the
feast
Variously gay: for he that tells the
tale
Liken'd them, saying, as when an
hour of cold
Falls on the mountain in midsummer
snows,
And all the purple slopes of mountain
flowers
Pass under white, till the warm hour
returns
With veer of wind, and all are flow-
ers again;
So dame and damsel cast the simple
white,
And glowing in all colors, the live
grass,
Rose-campion, bluebell, kingcup,
poppy, glanced
About the revels, and with mirth so
loud
Beyond all use, that, half-amazed, the
Queen,
And wroth at Tristram and the law-
less jousts,
Brake up their sports, then slowly to
her bower
Parted, and in her bosom pain was
lord.

And little Dagonet on the morrow
morn,
High over all the yellowing Autumn-
tide,
Danced like a wither'd leaf before the
hall.
Then Tristram saying, 'Why skip ye
so, Sir Fool?'
Wheel'd round on either heel, Dag-
onet replied,
'Belike for lack of wiser company;
Or being fool, and seeing too much
wit

Makes the world rotten, why, belike I
 skip
 To know myself the wisest knight of
 all.'
 'Ay, fool,' said Tristram, 'but 'tis eat-
 ing dry
 To dance without a catch, a rounde-
 lay
 To dance to.' Then he twangled on
 his harp,
 And while he twangled little Dagonet
 stood
 Quiet as any water-sodden log
 Stay'd in the wandering warble of a
 brook;
 But when the twangling ended, skipt
 again;
 And being ask'd, 'Why skipt ye not,
 Sir Fool?'
 Made answer, 'I had liefer twenty
 years
 Skip to the broken music of my
 brains
 Than any broken music thou canst
 make.'
 Then Tristram, waiting for the quip
 to come,
 'Good now, what music have I
 broken, fool?'
 And little Dagonet, skipping, 'Ar-
 thur, the King's;
 For when thou playest that air with
 Queen Isolt,
 Thou makest broken music with thy
 bride,
 Her daintier namesake down in Brit-
 tany—
 And so thou breakest Arthur's music
 too.'
 'Save for that broken music in thy
 brains,
 Sir Fool,' said Tristram, 'I would
 break thy head.
 Fool, I came late, the heathen wars
 were o'er,
 The life had flown, we sware but by
 the shell—
 I am but a fool to reason with a fool—
 Come, thou art crabb'd and sour: but
 lean me down,
 Sir Dagonet, one of thy long asses'
 ears,
 And harken if my music be not true.

"Free love—free field—we love
 but while we may:
 The woods are hush'd, their music is
 no more:
 The leaf is dead, the yearning past
 away:
 New leaf, new life—the days of frost
 are o'er:
 New life, new love, to suit the newer
 day:
 New loves are sweet as those that
 went before:
 Free love—free field—we love but
 while we may."

'Ye might have moved slow-meas-
 ure to my tune,
 Not stood stockstill. I made it in the
 woods,
 And heard it ring as true as tested
 gold.'

But Dagonet with one foot poised
 in his hand,
 'Friend, did ye mark that fountain
 yesterday
 Made to run wine?—but this had run
 itself
 All out like a long life to a sour
 end—
 And them that round it sat with
 golden cups
 To hand the wine to whosoever
 came—
 The twelve small damosels white as
 Innocence,
 In honor of poor Innocence the
 babe,
 Who left the gems which Innocence
 the Queen
 Lent to the King, and Innocence the
 King
 Gave for a prize—and one of those
 white slips
 Handed her cup and piped, the pretty
 one,
 "Drink, drink, Sir Fool," and there-
 upon I drank,
 Spat—pish—the cup was gold, the
 draught was mud.'

And Tristram, 'Was it muddier
 than thy gibes?

Is all the laughter gone dead out of thee?—

Not marking how the knighthood mock thee, fool—

“Fear God: honor the King—his one true knight—

Sole follower of the vows”—for here be they

Who knew thee swine enow before I came,

Smuttier than blasted grain: but when the King

Had made thee fool, thy vanity so shot up

It frighted all free fool from out thy heart;

Which left thee less than fool, and less than swine,

A naked aught—yet swine I hold thee still,

For I have flung thee pearls and find thee swine.’

And little Dagonet mincing with his feet,

‘Knight, an ye fling those rubies round my neck

In lieu of hers, I’ll hold thou hast some touch

Of music, since I care not for thy pearls.

Swine? I have wallow’d, I have wash’d—the world

Is flesh and shadow—I have had my day.

The dirty nurse, Experience, in her kind

Hath foul’d me—an I wallow’d, then I wash’d—

I have had my day and my philosophies—

And thank the Lord I am King Arthur’s fool.

Swine, say ye? swine, goats, asses, rams and geese

Troop’d round a Paynim harper once, who thrumm’d

On such a wire as musically as thou

Some such fine song—but never a king’s fool.’

And Tristram, ‘Then were swine, goats, asses, geese

The wiser fools, seeing thy Paynim bard

Had such a mastery of his mystery That he could harp his wife up out of hell.’

Then Dagonet, turning on the ball of his foot,

‘And whither harp’st thou thine? down! and thyself

Down! and two more: a helpful harper thou,

That harpest downward! Dost thou know the star

We call the harp of Arthur up in heaven?’

And Tristram, ‘Ay, Sir Fool, for when our King

Was victor wellnigh day by day, the knights,

Glorying in each new glory, set his name

High on all hills, and in the signs of heaven.’

And Dagonet answer’d, ‘Ay, and when the land

Was freed, and the Queen false, ye set yourself

To babble about him, all to show your wit—

And whether he were King by court-esy,

Or King by right—and so went harping down

The black king’s highway, got so far, and grew

So witty that ye play’d at ducks and drakes

With Arthur’s vows on the great lake of fire.

Tuwhoo! do ye see it? do ye see the star?’

‘Nay, fool,’ said Tristram, ‘not in open day.’

And Dagonet, ‘Nay, nor will: I see it and hear.

It makes a silent music up in heaven,

And I, and Arthur and the angels hear,

And then we skip.' 'Lo, fool,' he
 said, 'ye talk
 Fool's treason: is the King thy
 brother fool?'
 Then little Dagonet clapt his hands
 and shrill'd,
 'Ay, ay, my brother fool, the king of
 fools!
 Conceits himself as God that he can
 make
 Figs out of thistles, silk from bristles,
 milk
 From burning spurge, honey from
 hornet-combs,
 And men from beasts—Long live the
 king of fools!'

And down the city Dagonet danced
 away;
 But thro' the slowly-mellowing
 avenues
 And solitary passes of the wood
 Rode Tristram toward Lyonnesse and
 the west.
 Before him fled the face of Queen
 Isolt
 With ruby-circled neck, but evermore
 Past, as a rustle or twitter in the
 wood
 Made dull his inner, keen his outer
 eye
 For all that walk'd, or crept, or perch'd,
 or flew.
 Anon the face, as, when a gust hath
 blown,
 Unruffling waters re-collect the
 shape
 Of one that in them sees himself, re-
 turn'd;
 But at the slot or fewmets of a deer,
 Or ev'n a fall'n feather, vanish'd
 again.

So on for all that day from lawn to
 lawn
 Thro' many a league-long bower he
 rode. At length
 A lodge of intertwined beechen-
 boughs
 Furze-cramm'd, and bracken-rooft,
 the which himself
 Built for a summer day with Queen
 Isolt

Against a shower, dark in the golden
 grove
 Appearing, sent his fancy back to
 where
 She lived a moon in that low lodge
 with him:
 Till Mark her lord had past, the Cor-
 nish King,
 With six or seven, when Tristram was
 away,
 And snatch'd her thence; yet dreading
 worse than shame
 Her warrior Tristram, spake not any
 word,
 But bode his hour, devising wretched-
 ness.

And now that desert lodge to
 Tristram lookt
 So sweet, that halting, in he past, and
 sank
 Down on a drift of foliage random-
 blown;
 But could not rest for musing how to
 smoothe
 And sleek his marriage over to the
 Queen.
 Perchance in lone Tintagil far from all
 The tonguesters of the court she had
 not heard.
 But then what folly had sent him over-
 seas
 After she left him lonely here? a
 name?
 Was it the name of one in Brittany,
 Isolt, the daughter of the King?
 'Isolt
 Of the white hands' they call'd her:
 the sweet name
 Allured him first, and then the maid
 herself,
 Who served him well with those white
 hands of hers,
 And loved him well, until himself had
 thought
 He loved her also, wedded easily,
 But left her all as easily, and return'd.
 The black-blue Irish hair and Irish
 eyes
 Had drawn him home—what marvel?
 then he laid
 His brows upon the drifted leaf and
 dream'd.

He seem'd to pace the strand of
 Brittany
 Between Isolt of Britain and his
 bride,
 And show'd them both the ruby-
 chain, and both
 Began to struggle for it, till his Queen
 Graspt it so hard, that all her hand
 was red.
 Then cried the Breton, 'Look, her
 hand is red!
 These be no rubies, this is frozen
 blood,
 And melts within her hand—her hand
 is hot
 With ill desires, but this I gave thee,
 look,
 Is all as cool and white as any flower.'
 Follow'd a rush of eagle's wings, and
 then
 A whimpering of the spirit of the
 child,
 Because the twain had spoil'd her car-
 canet.

He dream'd; but Arthur with a
 hundred spears
 Rode far, till o'er the illimitable reed,
 And many a glancing plash and sal-
 lowy isle,
 The wide-wing'd sunset of the misty
 marsh
 Glared on a huge machicolated tower
 That stood with open doors, whereout
 was roll'd
 A roar of riot, as from men secure
 Amid their marshes, ruffians at their
 ease
 Among their harlot-brides, an evil
 song.
 'Lo there,' said one of Arthur's
 youth, for there,
 High on a grim dead tree before the
 tower,
 A goodly brother of the Table Round
 Swung by the neck: and on the
 boughs a shield
 Showing a shower of blood in a field
 noir,
 And therebeside a horn, inflamed the
 knights
 At that dishonor done the gilded
 spur,

Till each would clash the shield, and
 blow the horn.
 But Arthur waved them back. Alone
 he rode.
 Then at the dry harsh roar of the
 great horn,
 That sent the face of all the marsh
 aloft
 An ever upward-rushing storm and
 cloud
 Of shriek and plume, the Red Knight
 heard, and all,
 Even to tipmost lance and topmost
 helm,
 In blood-red armor, sallying, howl'd
 to the King,

'The teeth of Hell—flay bare and
 gnash thee flat!—
 Lo! art thou not that eunuch-hearted
 King
 Who fain had clipt free manhood
 from the world—
 The woman-worshipper? Yea, God's
 curse, and I!
 Slain was the brother of my para-
 mour
 By a knight of thine, and I that heard
 her whine
 And snivel, being eunuch-hearted too,
 Sware by the scorpion-worm that
 twists in hell,
 And stings itself to everlasting death,
 To hang whatever knight of thine I
 fought
 And tumbled. Art thou King?—Look
 to thy life!'

He ended: Arthur knew the voice;
 the face
 Wellnigh was helmet-hidden, and the
 name
 Went wandering somewhere darkling
 in his mind.
 And Arthur deign'd not use of word
 or sword,
 But let the drunkard, as he stretch'd
 from horse
 To strike him, overbalancing his bulk,
 Down from the causeway heavily to
 the swamp
 Fall, as the crest of some slow-arch-
 ing wave,

Heard in dead night along that table-shore,
 Drops flat, and after the great waters break
 Whitening for half a league, and thin themselves,
 Far over sands marbled with moon and cloud,
 From less and less to nothing; thus he fell
 Head-heavy; then the knights, who watch'd him, roar'd
 And shouted and leapt down upon the fall'n;
 There trampled out his face from being known,
 And sank his head in mire, and slimed themselves:
 Nor heard the King for their own cries, but sprang
 Thro' open doors, and swording right and left
 Men, women, on their sodden faces, huri'd
 The tables over and the wines, and slew
 Till all the rafters rang with woman-yells,
 And all the pavement stream'd with massacre;
 Then, echoing yell with yell, they fired the tower,
 Which half that autumn night, like the live North,
 Red-pulsing up thro' Alioth and Alcor,
 Made all above it, and a hundred meres
 About it, as the water Moab saw
 Come round by the East, and out beyond them flush'd
 The long low dune, and lazy-plunging sea.

So all the ways were safe from shore to shore,
 But in the heart of Arthur pain was lord.

Then, out of Tristram waking, the red dream
 Fled with a shout, and that low lodge return'd,

Mid-forest, and the wind among the boughs.
 He whistled his good warhorse left to graze
 Among the forest greens, vaulted upon him,
 And rode beneath an ever-showering leaf,
 Till one lone woman, weeping near a cross,
 Stay'd him. 'Why weep ye?' 'Lord,' she said, 'my man
 Hath left me or is dead;' whereon he thought—
 'What, if she hate me now? I would not this.
 What, if she love me still? I would not that.
 I know not what I would'—but said to her,
 'Yet weep not thou, lest, if thy mate return,
 He find thy favor changed and love thee not'—
 Then pressing day by day thro' Lyonesse
 Last in a roky hollow, belling, heard
 The hounds of Mark, and felt the goodly hounds
 Yelp at his heart, but turning, past and gain'd
 Tintagil, half in sea, and high on land,
 A crown of towers.

Down in a casement sat,
 A low sea-sunset glorying round her hair
 And glossy-throated grace, Isolt the Queen.
 And when she heard the feet of Tristram grind
 The spiring stone that scaled about her tower,
 Flush'd, started, met him at the doors, and there
 Belted his body with her white embrace,
 Crying aloud, 'Not Mark—not Mark, my soul!
 The footstep flutter'd me at first: not he:
 Catlike thro' his own castle steals my Mark,

But warrior-wise thou stridest thro'
his halls
Who hates thee, as I him—ev'n to
the death.
My soul, I felt my hatred for my
Mark
Quickened within me, and knew that
thou wert nigh.'
To whom Sir Tristram smiling, 'I am
here.
Let be thy Mark, seeing he is not
thine.'

And drawing somewhat backward
she replied,
'Can he be wrong'd who is not ev'n
his own,
But save for dread of thee had beaten
me,
Scratch'd, bitten, blinded, marr'd me
somehow—Mark?
What rights are his that dare not
strike for them?
Not lift a hand—not, tho' he found
me thus!
But harken! have ye met him? hence
he went
To-day for three days' hunting—as he
said—
And so returns belike within an hour.
Mark's way, my soul!—but eat not
thou with Mark,
Because he hates thee even more than
fears;
Nor drink: and when thou passest
any wood
Close vistor, lest an arrow from the
bush
Should leave me all alone with Mark
and hell.
My God, the measure of my hate for
Mark
Is as the measure of my love for thee.'

So, pluck'd one way by hate and one
by love,
Drain'd of her force, again she sat,
and spake
To Tristram, as he knelt before her,
saying,
'O hunter, and O blower of the horn,
Harper, and thou hast been a rover
too,

For, ere I mated with my shambling
king,
Ye twain had fallen out about the
bride
Of one—his name is out of me—the
prize,
If prize she were—(what marvel—she
could see)—
Thine, friend; and ever since my
craven seeks
To wreck thee villainously: but, O Sir
Knight,
What dame or damsel have ye kneel'd
to last?'

And Tristram, 'Last to my Queen
Paramount,
Here now to my Queen Paramount of
love
And loveliness—ay, lovelier than
when first
Her light feet fell on our rough Lyon-
nesse,
Sailing from Ireland.'

Softly laugh'd Isolt;
'Flatter me not, for hath not our great
Queen
My dole of beauty trebled?' and he
said,
'Her beauty is her beauty, and thine
thine,
And thine is more to me—soft, gra-
cious, kind—
Save when thy Mark is kindled on
thy lips
Most gracious; but she, haughty, ev'n
to him,
Lancelot; for I have seen him wan
enow
To make one doubt if ever the great
Queen
Have yielded him her love.'

To whom Isolt,
'Ah then, false hunter and false har-
per, thou
Who brakest thro' the scruple of my
bond,
Calling me thy white hind, and saying
to me
That Guinevere had sinn'd against
the highest,

And I—misjoyed with such a want
of man—
That I could hardly sin against the
lowest.'

He answer'd, 'O my soul, be comforted!
If this be sweet, to sin in leading-
strings,
If here be comfort, and if ours be sin,
Crown'd warrant had we for the
crowning sin
That made us happy: but how ye
greet me—fear
And fault and doubt—no word of that
fond tale—
Thy deep heart-yearnings, thy sweet
memories
Of Tristram in that year he was away.'

And, saddening on the sudden,
spake Isolt,
I had forgotten all in my strong joy
To see thee—yearnings?—ay! for,
hour by hour,
Here in the never-ended afternoon,
O sweeter than all memories of thee,
Deeper than any yearnings after thee
Seem'd those far-rolling, westward-
smiling seas,
Watch'd from this tower. Isolt of
Britain dash'd
Before Isolt of Brittany on the strand,
Would that have chill'd her bride-
kiss? Wedded her?
Fought in her father's battles?
wounded there?
The King was all fulfill'd with grate-
fulness,
And she, my namesake of the hands,
that heal'd
Thy hurt and heart with unguent and
caress—
Well—can I wish her any huger
wrong
Than having known thee? her too
hast thou left
To pine and waste in those sweet
memories.
O were I not my Mark's, by whom all
men
Are noble, I should hate thee more
than love.'

And Tristram, fondling her light
hands, replied,
'Grace, Queen, for being loved: she
loved me well.
Did I love her? the name at least I
loved.
Isolt?—I fought his battles, for Isolt!
The night was dark; the true star set.
Isolt!
The name was ruler of the dark—
Isolt?
Care not for her! patient, and prayer-
ful, meek,
Pale-blooded, she will yield herself to
God.'

And Isolt answer'd, 'Yea, and why
not I?
Mine is the larger need, who am not
meek,
Pale-blooded, prayerful. Let me tell
thee now.
Here one black, mute midsummer
night I sat,
Lonely, but musing on thee, wonder-
ing where,
Murmuring a light song I had heard
thee sing,
And once or twice I spake thy name
aloud.
Then flash'd a levin-brand; and near
me stood,
In fuming sulphur blue and green, a
fiend—
Mark's way to steal behind one in the
dark—
For there was Mark: "He has wed-
ded her," he said,
Not said, but hiss'd it: then this
crown of towers
So shook to such a roar of all the
sky,
That here in utter dark I swoon'd
away,
And woke again in utter dark, and
cried,
"I will flee hence and give myself to
God"—
And thou wert lying in thy new le-
man's arms.'

Then Tristram, ever dallying with
her hand,



"The moon like a rick on
was rising over the dale" ^{fire}

‘ May God be with thee, sweet, when
old and gray,
And past desire!’ a saying that angered her.
“ May God be with thee, sweet, when
thou art old,
And sweet no more to me!” I need
Him now.
For when had Lancelot utter’d aught
so gross
Ev’n to the swineherd’s malkin in the
mast?
The greater man, the greater courtesy.
Far other was the Tristram, Arthur’s
knight!
But thou, thro’ ever harrying thy wild
beasts—
Save that to touch a harp, tilt with a
lance
Becomes thee well—art grown wild
beast thyself.
How darest thou, if lover, push me
even
In fancy from thy side, and set me far
In the gray distance, half a life away,
Her to be loved no more? Unsay it,
unswear!
Flatter me rather, seeing me so weak,
Broken with Mark and hate and soli-
tude,
Thy marriage and mine own, that I
should suck
Lies like sweet wines: lie to me: I
believe.
Will ye not lie? not swear, as there
ye kneel,
And solemnly as when ye sware to
him,
The man of men, our King—My God,
the power
Was once in vows when men believed
the King!
They lied not then, who sware, and
thro’ their vows
The King prevailing made his
realm:—I say,
Swear to me thou wilt love me ev’n
when old,
Gray-hair’d, and past desire, and in
despair.’

Then Tristram, pacing moodily up
and down,

‘ Vows! did you keep the vow you
made to Mark
More than I mine? Lied, say ye?
Nay, but learnt,
The vow that binds too strictly snaps
itself—
My knighthood taught me this—ay,
being snapt—
We run more counter to the soul
thereof
Than had we never sworn. I swear
no more.
I swore to the great King, and am
forsworn.
For once—ev’n to the height—I hon-
or’d him.
“ Man, is he man at all?” methought,
when first
I rode from our rough Lyonnésse, and
beheld
That victor of the Pagan throned in
hall—
His hair, a sun that ray’d from off a
brow
Like hillsnow high in heaven, the
steel-blue eyes,
The golden beard that clothed his lips
with light—
Moreover, that weird legend of his
birth,
With Merlin’s mystic babble about
his end
Amazed me; then, his foot was on a
stool
Shaped as a dragon; he seem’d to me
no man,
But Michaël trampling Satan; so I
sware,
Being amazed: but this went by—The
vows!
O ay—the wholesome madness of an
hour—
They served their use, their time; for
every knight
Believed himself a greater than him-
self,
And every follower eyed him as a God;
Till he, being lifted up beyond him-
self,
Did mightier deeds than elsewhere he
had done,
And so the realm was made; but then
their vows—

First mainly thro' that sullyng of our
 Queen—
 Began to gall the knighthood, asking
 whence
 Had Arthur right to bind them to
 himself?
 Dropt down from heaven? wash'd up
 from out the deep?
 They fail'd to trace him thro' the
 flesh and blood
 Of our old kings: whence then? a
 doubtful lord
 To bind them by inviolable vows,
 Which flesh and blood perforce
 would violate:
 For feel this arm of mine—the tide
 within
 Red with free chase and heather-
 scented air,
 Pulsing full man; can Arthur make
 me pure
 As any maiden child? lock up my
 tongue
 From uttering freely what I freely
 hear?
 Bind me to one? The wide world
 laughs at it.
 And worldling of the world am I, and
 know
 The ptarmigan that whitens ere his
 hour
 Woos his own end; we are not angels
 here
 Nor shall be: vows—I am woodman
 of the woods,
 And hear the garnet-headed yaffin-
 gale
 Mock them: my soul, we love but
 while we may;
 And therefore is my love so large for
 thee,
 Seeing it is not bounded save by love.'

Here ending, he moved toward her,
 and she said,
 'Good: an I turn'd away my love for
 thee
 To some one thrice as courteous as
 thyself—
 For courtesy wins woman all as well
 As valor may, but he that closes both
 Is perfect, he is Lancelot—taller
 indeed,

Rosier and comelier, thou—but say I
 loved
 This knightliest of all knights, and
 cast thee back
 Thine own small saw, "We love but
 while we may,"
 Well then, what answer?'

He that while she spake,
 Mindful of what he brought to adorn
 her with,
 The jewels, had let one finger lightly
 touch
 The warm white apple of her throat,
 replied,
 'Press this a little closer, sweet, until—
 Come, I am hunger'd and half-anger'd
 —meat,
 Wine, wine—and I will love thee to
 the death,
 And out beyond into the dream to
 come.'

So then, when both were brought
 to full accord,
 She rose, and set before him all he
 will'd;
 And after these had comforted the
 blood
 With meats and wines, and satiated
 their hearts—
 Now talking of their woodland para-
 dise,
 The deer, the dews, the fern, the
 founts, the lawns;
 Now mocking at the much ungainli-
 ness,
 And craven shifts, and long crane
 legs of Mark—
 Then Tristram laughing caught the
 harp, and sang:

'Ay, ay, O ay—the winds that bend
 the brier!
 A star in heaven, a star within the
 mere!
 Ay, ay, O ay—a star was my desire,
 And one was far apart, and one was
 near:
 Ay, ay, O ay—the winds that bow the
 grass!
 And one was water and one star was
 fire,

And one will ever shine and one will
pass.
Ay, ay, O ay—the winds that move
the mere.'

Then in the light's last glimmer
Tristram show'd
And swung the ruby carcanet. She
cried,
'The collar of some Order, which our
King
Hath newly founded, all for thee, my
soul,
For thee, to yield thee grace beyond
thy peers.'

'Not so, my Queen,' he said, 'but
the red fruit
Grown on a magic oak-tree in mid-
heaven,
And won by Tristram as a tourney-
prize,
And hither brought by Tristram for
his last
Love-offering and peace-offering unto
thee.'

He spoke, he turn'd, then, flinging
round her neck,
Claspt it, and cried 'Thine Order, O
my Queen !'
But, while he bow'd to kiss the jewell'd
throat,
Out of the dark, just as the lips had
touch'd,
Behind him rose a shadow and a
shriek—
'Mark's way,' said Mark, and clove
him thro' the brain.

That night came Arthur home, and
while he climb'd,
All in a death-dumb autumn-dripping
gloom,
The stairway to the hall, and look'd
and saw
The great Queen's bower was dark,—
about his feet
A voice clung sobbing till he ques-
tion'd it,
'What art thou?' and the voice
about his feet

Sent up an answer, sobbing, 'I am
thy fool,
And I shall never make thee smile
again.'

GUINEVERE.

QUEEN GUINEVERE had fled the
court, and sat
There in the holy house at Almes-
bury
Weeping, none with her save a little
maid,
A novice: one low light betwixt them
burn'd
Blurr'd by the creeping mist, for all
aboard,
Beneath a moon unseen albeit at full,
The white mist, like a face-cloth to
the face,
Clung to the dead earth, and the
land was still.

For hither had she fled, her cause
of flight
Sir Modred; he that like a subtle
beast
Lay couchant with his eyes upon the
throne,
Ready to spring, waiting a chance:
for this
He chill'd the popular praises of the
King
With silent smiles of slow disparage-
ment;
And tamper'd with the Lords of the
White Horse.
Heathen, the brood by Hengist left;
and sought
To make disruption in the Table
Round
Of Arthur, and to splinter it into
feuds
Serving his traitorous end; and all
his aims
Were sharpen'd by strong hate for
Lancelot.

For thus it chanced one morn when
all the court,
Green-suited, but with plumes that
mock'd the may,

Had been, their wot, a-maying and
 return'd,
 That Modred still in green, all ear
 and eye,
 Climb'd to the high top of the gar-
 den-wall-
 To spy some secret scandal if he
 might,
 And saw the Queen who sat betwixt
 her best
 Enid, and lissome Vivien, of her
 court
 The wildest and the worst; and more
 than this
 He saw not, for Sir Lancelot passing
 by
 Spied where he couch'd, and as the
 gardener's hand
 Picks from the colewort a green cater-
 pillar,
 So from the high wall and the flower-
 ing grove
 Of grasses Lancelot pluck'd him by
 the heel,
 And cast him as a worm upon the
 way;
 But when he knew the Prince tho'
 marr'd with dust,
 He, reverencing king's blood in a bad
 man,
 Made such excuses as he might, and
 these
 Full knightly without scorn; for in
 those days
 No knight of Arthur's noblest dealt
 in scorn;
 But, if a man were halt or hunch'd, in
 him
 By those whom God had made full-
 limb'd and tall,
 Scorn was allow'd as part of his
 defect,
 And he was answer'd softly by the
 King
 And all his Table. So Sir Lancelot
 help
 To raise the Prince, who rising twice
 or thrice
 Full sharply smote his knees, and
 smiled, and went:
 But, ever after, the small violence done
 Rankled in him and ruffled all his
 heart,

As the sharp wind that ruffles all day
 long
 A little bitter pool about a stone
 On the bare coast.

But when Sir Lancelot told
 This matter to the Queen, at first she
 laugh'd
 Lightly, to think of Modred's dusty
 fall,
 Then shudder'd as the village wife
 who cries
 'I shudder, some one steps across my
 grave;'
 Then laugh'd again, but faintlier, for
 indeed
 She half-foresaw that he, the subtle
 beast,
 Would track her guilt until he found,
 and hers
 Would be for evermore a name of
 scorn.
 Henceforward rarely could she front
 in hall,
 Or elsewhere, Modred's narrow foxy
 face,
 Heart-hiding smile, and gray persist-
 ent eye:
 Henceforward too, the Powers that
 tend the soul,
 To help it from the death that cannot
 die,
 And save it even in extremes, began
 To vex and plague her. Many a time
 for hours,
 Beside the placid breathings of the
 King,
 In the dead night, grim faces came
 and went
 Before her, or a vague spiritual
 fear—
 Like to some doubtful noise of creak-
 ing doors,
 Heard by the watcher in a haunted
 house,
 That keeps the rust of murder on the
 walls—
 Held her awake: or if she slept she
 dream'd
 An awful dream; for then she seem'd
 to stand
 On some vast plain before a setting
 sun,

And from the sun there swiftly made
 at her
 A ghastly something, and its shadow
 flew
 Before it, till it touch'd her, and she
 turn'd—
 When lo! her own, that broadening
 from her feet,
 And blackening, swallow'd all the
 land, and in it
 Far cities burnt, and with a cry she
 woke.
 And all this trouble did not pass but
 grew;
 Till ev'n the clear face of the guileless
 King,
 And trustful courtesies of household
 life,
 Became her bane; and at the last she
 said,
 'O Lancelot, get thee hence to thine
 own land,
 For if thou tarry we shall meet again,
 And if we meet again, some evil
 chance
 Will make the smouldering scandal
 break and blaze
 Before the people, and our lord the
 King.'
 And Lancelot ever promised, but re-
 main'd,
 And still they met and met. Again
 she said,
 'O Lancelot, if thou love me get thee
 hence.'
 And then they were agreed upon a
 night
 (When the good King should not be
 there) to meet
 And part for ever. Vivien, lurking,
 heard.
 She told Sir Modred. Passion-pale
 they met
 And greeted. Hands in hands, and
 eye to eye
 Low on the border of her couch they
 sat
 Stammering and staring. It was
 their last hour,
 A madness of farewells. And Mod-
 red brought
 His creatures to the basement of the
 tower

For testimony; and crying with full
 voice
 'Traitor, come out, ye are trapt at
 last,' aroused
 Lancelot, who rushing outward lion-
 like
 Leapt on him, and hurl'd him head-
 long, and he fell
 Stunn'd, and his creatures took and
 bare him off,
 And all was still: then she, 'The end
 is come,
 And I am shamed for ever;' and he
 said,
 'Mine be the shame; mine was the
 sin: but rise,
 And fly to my strong castle overseas:
 There will I hide thee, till my life shall
 end,
 There hold thee with my life against
 the world.'
 She answer'd, 'Lancelot, wilt thou
 hold me so?
 Nay, friend, for we have taken our
 farewells.
 Would God that thou couldst hide
 me from myself!
 Mine is the shame, for I was wife, and
 thou
 Unwedded: yet rise now, and let us fly,
 For I will draw me into sanctuary,
 And bide my doom.' So Lancelot
 got her horse,
 Set her thereon, and mounted on his
 own,
 And then they rode to the divided
 way,
 There kiss'd, and parted weeping: for
 he past,
 Love-loyal to the least wish of the
 Queen,
 Back to his land; but she to Almes-
 bury
 Fled all night long by glimmering
 waste and weald,
 And heard the Spirits of the waste
 and weald
 Moan as she fled, or thought she
 heard them moan:
 And in herself she moan'd 'Too late,
 too late!
 Till in the cold wind that foreruns the
 morn,

A blot in heaven, the Raven, flying
 high,
 Croak'd, and she thought, 'He spies a
 field of death;
 For now the Heathen of the Northern
 Sea,
 Lured by the crimes and frailties of
 the court,
 Begin to slay the folk, and spoil the
 land.'

And when she came to Almesbury
 she spake
 There to the nuns, and said, 'Mine
 enemies
 Pursue me, but, O peaceful Sister-
 hood,
 Receive, and yield me sanctuary, nor
 ask
 Her name to whom ye yield it, till her
 time
 To tell you:' and her beauty, grace
 and power,
 Wrought as a charm upon them, and
 they spared
 To ask it.

So the stately Queen abode
 For many a week, unknown, among
 the nuns;
 Nor with them mix'd, nor told her
 name, nor sought,
 Wrapt in her grief, for housel or for
 shrift,
 But communed only with the little
 maid,
 Who pleased her with a babbling
 heedlessness
 Which often lured her from herself;
 but now,
 This night, a rumor wildly blown about
 Came, that Sir Modred had usurp'd
 the realm,
 And leagued him with the heathen,
 while the King
 Was waging war on Lancelot: then
 she thought,
 'With what a hate the people and
 the King
 Must hate me,' and bow'd down upon
 her hands
 Silent, until the little maid, who
 brook'd

No silence, brake it, uttering 'Late!
 so late!
 What hour, I wonder, now?' and
 when she drew
 No answer, by and by began to hum
 An air the nuns had taught her; 'Late,
 so late!
 Which when she heard, the Queen
 look'd up, and said,
 'O maiden, if indeed ye list to sing,
 Sing, and unbind my heart that I may
 weep.'
 Whereat full willingly sang the little
 maid.

'Late, late, so late! and dark the
 night and chill!
 Late, late, so late! but we can enter
 still.
 Too late, too late! ye cannot enter
 now.

'No light had we: for that we do
 repent;
 And learning this, the bridegroom
 will relent.
 Too late, too late! ye cannot enter
 now.

'No light: so late! and dark and
 chill the night!
 O let us in, that we may find the
 light!
 Too late, too late: ye cannot enter
 now.

'Have we not heard the bridegroom
 is so sweet?
 O let us in, tho' late, to kiss his feet!
 No, no, too late! ye cannot enter
 now.'

So sang the novice, while full pas-
 sionately,
 Her head upon her hands, remember-
 ing
 Her thought when first she came,
 wept the sad Queen.
 Then said the little novice prattling
 to her,

'O pray you, noble lady, weep no
 more;

But let my words, the words of one so small,
 Who knowing nothing knows but to obey,
 And if I do not there is penance given—
 Comfort your sorrows; for they do not flow
 From evil done; right sure am I of that,
 Who see your tender grace and state-
 liness.
 But weigh your sorrows with our lord the King's,
 And weighing find them less; for gone is he
 To wage grim war against Sir Lancelot there,
 Round that strong castle where he holds the Queen;
 And Modred whom he left in charge of all,
 The traitor—Ah sweet lady, the King's grief
 For his own self, and his own Queen, and realm,
 Must needs be thrice as great as any of ours.
 For me, I thank the saints, I am not great.
 For if there ever come a grief to me
 I cry my cry in silence, and have done.
 None knows it, and my tears have brought me good:
 But even were the griefs of little ones
 As great as those of great ones, yet this grief
 Is added to the griefs the great must bear,
 That howsoever much they may desire
 Silence, they cannot weep behind a cloud:
 As even here they talk at Almesbury
 About the good King and his wicked Queen,
 And were I such a King with such a Queen,
 Well might I wish to veil her wickedness,
 But were I such a King, it could not be.'

Then to her own sad heart mutter'd the Queen,
 'Will the child kill me with her innocent talk?'
 But openly she answer'd, 'Must not I,
 If this false traitor have displaced his lord,
 Grieve with the common grief of all the realm?'

'Yea,' said the maid, 'this is all woman's grief,
 That *she* is woman, whose disloyal life
 Hath wrought confusion in the Table Round
 Which good King Arthur founded, years ago,
 With signs and miracles and wonders, there
 At Camelot, ere the coming of the Queen.'

Then thought the Queen within herself again,
 'Will the child kill me with her foolish prate?'
 But openly she spake and said to her,
 'O little maid, shut in by nunnery walls,
 What canst thou know of Kings and Tables Round,
 Or what of signs and wonders, but the signs
 And simple miracles of thy nunnery?'

To whom the little novice garrulously,
 'Yea, but I know: the land was full of signs
 And wonders ere the coming of the Queen.
 So said my father, and himself was knight
 Of the great Table—at the founding of it;
 And rode thereto from Lyonesse, and he said
 That as he rode, an hour or maybe twain
 After the sunset, down the coast, he heard

Strange music, and he paused, and
 turning—there,
 All down the lonely coast of Lyon-
 nesse,
 Each with a beacon-star upon his
 head,
 And with a wild sea-light about his
 feet,
 He saw them—headland after head-
 land flame
 Far on into the rich heart of the west :
 And in the light the white mermaiden
 swam,
 And strong man-breasted things stood
 from the sea,
 And sent a deep sea-voice thro' all the
 land,
 To which the little elves of chasm and
 cleft
 Made answer, sounding like a distant
 horn.
 So said my father—yea, and further-
 more,
 Next morning, while he past the dim-
 lit woods,
 Himself beheld three spirits mad with
 joy
 Come dashing down on a tall wayside
 flower,
 That shook beneath them, as the this-
 tle shakes
 When three gray linnets wrangle for
 the seed :
 And still at evenings on before his
 horse
 The flickering fairy-circle wheel'd and
 broke
 Flying, and link'd again, and wheel'd
 and broke
 Flying, for all the land was full of
 life.
 And when at last he came to Came-
 lot,
 A wreath of airy dancers hand-in-hand
 Swung round the lighted lantern of
 the hall ;
 And in the hall itself was such a feast
 As never man had dream'd ; for every
 knight
 Had whatsoever meat he long'd for
 served
 By hands unseen ; and even as he
 said

Down in the cellars merry bloated
 things
 Shoulder'd the spigot, straddling on
 the butts
 While the wine ran : so glad were
 spirits and men
 Before the coming of the sinful
 Queen.'

Then spake the Queen and some-
 what bitterly,
 ' Were they so glad ? ill prophets
 were they all,
 Spirits and men : could none of them
 foresee,
 Not even thy wise father with his signs
 And wonders, what has fall'n upon
 the realm ? '

To whom the novice garrulously
 again,
 ' Yea, one, a bard ; of whom my fa-
 ther said,
 Full many a noble war-song had he
 sung,
 Ev'n in the presence of an enemy's
 fleet,
 Between the steep cliff and the com-
 ing wave ;
 And many a mystic lay of life and
 death
 Had chanted on the smoky mountain-
 tops,
 When round him bent the spirits of
 the hills
 With all their dewy hair blown back
 like flame :
 So said my father—and that night the
 bard
 Sang Arthur's glorious wars, and sang
 the King
 As wellnigh more than man, and
 rail'd at those
 Who call'd him the false son of Gor-
 lois :
 For there was no man knew from
 whence he came ;
 But after tempest, when the long
 wave broke
 All down the thundering shores of
 Bude and Bos,
 There came a day as still as heaven,
 and then

They found a naked child upon the
sands
Of dark Tintagil by the Cornish sea;
And that was Arthur; and they foster'd him
Till he by miracle was approven
King:
And that his grave should be a mystery
From all men, like his birth; and could
he find
A woman in her womanhood as great
As he was in his manhood, then, he
sang,
The twain together well might change
the world.
But even in the middle of his song
He falter'd, and his hand fell from
the harp,
And pale he turn'd, and reel'd, and
would have fall'n,
But that they stay'd him up; nor
would he tell
His vision; but what doubt that he
foresaw
This evil work of Lancelot and the
Queen?'

Then thought the Queen, 'Lo! they
have set her on,
Our simple-seeming Abbess and her
nuns,
'To play upon me,' and bow'd her
head nor spake.
Whereat the novice crying, with
clasp'd hands,
Shame on her own garrulity garrulously,
Said the good nuns would check her
gadding tongue
Full often, 'and, sweet lady, if I seem
To vex an ear too sad to listen to
me,
Unmannerly, with prattling and the
tales
Which my good father told me, check
me too
Nor let me shame my father's memory, one
Of noblest manners, tho' himself
would say
Sir Lancelot had the noblest; and he
died,

Kill'd in a tilt, come next, five summers back,
And left me; but of others who remain,
And of the two first-famed for courtesy—
And pray you check me if I ask
amiss—
But pray you, which had noblest,
while you moved
Among them, Lancelot or our lord
the King?'

Then the pale Queen look'd up and
answer'd her,
'Sir Lancelot, as became a noble
knight,
Was gracious to all ladies, and the
same
In open battle or the tilting-field
Forbore his own advantage, and the
King
In open battle or the tilting-field
Forbore his own advantage, and these
two
Were the most nobly-manner'd men
of all;
For manners are not idle, but the
fruit
Of loyal nature, and of noble mind.'

'Yea,' said the maid, 'be manners
such fair fruit?
Then Lancelot's needs must be a
thousand-fold
Less noble, being, as all rumor runs,
The most disloyal friend in all the
world.'

To which a mournful answer made
the Queen:
'O closed about by narrowing nun-
nery-walls,
What knowest thou of the world, and
all its lights
And shadows, all the wealth and all
the woe?
If ever Lancelot, that most noble
knight,
Were for one hour less noble than
himself,
Pray for him that he scape the doom
of fire,

And weep for her who drew him to
his doom.'

'Yea,' said the little novice, 'I pray
for both;
But I should all as soon believe that
his,
Sir Lancelot's, were as noble as the
King's,
As I could think, sweet lady, yours
would be
Such as they are, were you the sinful
Queen.'

So she, like many another babbler,
hurt
Whom she would soothe, and harm'd
where she would heal;
For here a sudden flush of wrathful
heat
Fired all the pale face of the Queen,
who cried,
'Such as thou art be never maiden
more
For ever! thou their tool, set on to
plague
And play upon, and harry me, petty
spy
And traitress.' When that storm of
anger brake
From Guinevere, aghast the maiden
rose,
White as her veil, and stood before
the Queen
As tremulously as foam upon the
beach
Stands in a wind, ready to break and
fly,
And when the Queen had added 'Get
thee hence,'
Fled frightened. Then that other left
alone
Sigh'd, and began to gather heart
again,
Saying in herself, 'The simple, fear-
ful child
Meant nothing, but my own too-fear-
ful guilt,
Simpler than any child, betrays itself.
But help me, heaven, for surely I re-
pent.
For what is true repentance but in
thought—

Not ev'n in inmost thought to think
again
The sins that made the past so pleas-
ant to us:
And I have sworn never to see him
more,
To see him more.'

And ev'n in saying this,
Her memory from old habit of the
mind
Went slipping back upon the golden
days
In which she saw him first, when
Lancelot came,
Reputed the best knight and goodliest
man,
Ambassador, to lead her to his lord
Arthur, and led her forth, and far
ahead
Of his and her retinue moving, they,
Rapt in sweet talk or lively, all on
love
And sport and tilts and pleasure, (for
the time
Was maytime, and as yet no sin was
dream'd,)
Rode under groves that look'd a par-
adise
Of blossom, over sheets of hyacinth
That seem'd the heavens upbreking
thro' the earth,
And on from hill to hill, and every
day
Beheld at noon in some delicious dale
The silk pavilions of King Arthur
raised
For brief repast or afternoon repose
By couriers gone before; and on
again,
Till yet once more ere set of sun they
saw
The Dragon of the great Pendragon-
ship,
That crown'd the state pavilion of the
King,
Blaze by the rushing brook or silent
well.

But when the Queen immersed in
such a trance,
And moving thro' the past uncon-
sciously,

Came to that point where first she
 saw the King
 Ride toward her from the city, sigh'd
 to find
 Her journey done, glanced at him,
 thought him cold,
 High, self-contain'd, and passionless,
 not like him,
 'Not like my Lancelot'—while she
 brooded thus
 And grew half-guilty in her thoughts
 again,
 There rode an armed warrior to the
 doors.
 A murmuring whisper thro' the nun-
 nery ran,
 Then on a sudden a cry, 'The King.'
 She sat
 Stiff-stricken, listening; but when
 armed feet
 Thro' the long gallery from the outer
 doors
 Rang coming, prone from off her seat
 she fell,
 And grovell'd with her face against
 the floor:
 There with her milkwhite arms and
 shadowy hair
 She made her face a darkness from
 the King:
 And in the darkness heard his armed
 feet
 Pause by her; then came silence, then
 a voice,
 Monotonous and hollow like a Ghost's
 Denouncing judgment, but tho'
 changed, the King's:

'Liest thou here so low, the child
 of one
 I honor'd, happy, dead before thy
 shame?
 Well is it that no child is born of thee.
 The children born of thee are sword
 and fire,
 Red ruin, and the breaking up of
 laws,
 The craft of kindred and the Godless
 hosts
 Of heathen swarming o'er the North-
 ern Sea;
 Whom I, while yet Sir Lancelot, my
 right arm,

The mightiest of my knights, abode
 with me,
 Have everywhere about this land of
 Christ
 In twelve great battles ruining over-
 thrown.
 And knowest thou now from whence I
 come—from him,
 From waging bitter war with him: and
 he,
 That did not shun to smite me in
 worse way,
 Had yet that grace of courtesy in him
 left,
 He spared to lift his hand against the
 King
 Who made him knight: but many a
 knight was slain;
 And many more, and all his kith and
 kin
 Clave to him, and abode in his own
 land.
 And many more when Modred raised
 revolt,
 Forgetful of their troth and fealty,
 clave
 To Modred, and a remnant stays
 with me.
 And of this remnant will I leave a
 part,
 True men who love me still, for whom
 I live,
 To guard thee in the wild hour com-
 ing on,
 Lest but a hair of this low head be
 harm'd.
 Fear not: thou shalt be guarded till
 my death.
 Howbeit I know, if ancient prophecies
 Have err'd not, that I march to meet
 my doom.
 Thou hast not made my life so sweet
 to me,
 That I the King should greatly care
 to live;
 For thou hast spoilt the purpose of
 my life.
 Bear with me for the last time while I
 show,
 Ev'n for thy sake, the sin which thou
 hast sinn'd.
 For when the Roman left us, and
 their law

Relax'd its hold upon us, and the
 ways
 Were fill'd with rapine, here and there
 a deed
 Of prowess done redress'd a random
 wrong.
 But I was first of all the kings who
 drew
 The knighthood-errant of this realm
 and all
 The realms together under me, their
 Head,
 In that fair Order of my Table Round,
 A glorious company, the flower of
 men,
 To serve as model for the mighty
 world
 And be the fair beginning of a time.
 I made them lay their hands in mine
 and swear
 To reverence the King, as if he were
 Their conscience, and their conscience
 as their King,
 To break the heathen and uphold the
 Christ,
 To ride abroad redressing human
 wongs,
 To speak no slander, no, nor listen to
 it,
 To honor his own word as if his
 God's,
 To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,
 To love one maiden only, cleave to
 her,
 And worship her by years of noble
 deeds,
 Until they won her; for indeed I knew
 Of no more subtle master under
 heaven
 Than is the maiden passion for a
 maid,
 Not only to keep down the base in
 man,
 But teach high thought, and amiable
 words
 And courtliness, and the desire of
 fame,
 And love of truth, and all that makes
 a man.
 And all this throve before I wedded
 thee,
 Believing, "lo mine helpmate, one to
 feel

My purpose and rejoicing in my joy."
 Then came thy shameful sin with
 Lancelot;
 Then came the sin of Tristram and
 Isolt;
 Then others, following these my
 mightiest knights,
 And drawing foul ensample from fair
 names,
 Sinn'd also, till the loathsome oppo-
 site
 Of all my heart had destined did ob-
 tain,
 And all thro' thee! so that this life of
 mine
 I guard as God's high gift from scathe
 and wrong,
 Not greatly care to lose; but rather
 think
 How sad it were for Arthur, should
 he live,
 To sit once more within his lonely
 hall,
 And miss the wonted number of my
 knights,
 And miss to hear high talk of noble
 deeds
 As in the golden days before thy
 sin.
 For which of us, who might be left,
 could speak
 Of the pure heart, nor seem to glance
 at thee?
 And in thy bowers of Camelot or of
 Usk
 Thy shadow still would glide from
 room to room,
 And I should evermore be vexed with
 thee
 In hanging robe or vacant ornament,
 Or ghostly footfall echoing on the
 stair.
 For think not, tho' thou wouldst not
 love thy lord,
 Thy lord hast wholly lost his love for
 thee,
 I am not made of so slight elements.
 Yet must I leave thee, woman, to thy
 shame.
 I hold that man the worst of public
 foes
 Who either for his own or children's
 sake,

To save his blood from scandal, lets
 the wife
 Whom he knows false, abide and rule
 the house :
 For being thro' his cowardice allow'd
 Her station, taken everywhere for
 pure,
 She like a new disease, unknown to
 men,
 Creeps, no precaution used, among
 the crowd,
 Makes wicked lightnings of her eyes,
 and saps
 The fealty of our friends, and stirs the
 pulse
 With devil's leaps, and poisons half
 the young.
 Worst of the worst were that man he
 that reigns !
 Better the King's waste hearth and
 aching heart
 Than thou reseated in thy place of
 light,
 The mockery of my people, and their
 bane.

He paused, and in the pause she
 crept an inch
 Nearer, and laid her hands about his
 feet.
 Far off a solitary trumpet blew.
 Then waiting by the doors the war-
 horse neigh'd
 As at a friend's voice, and he spake
 again :

'Yet think not that I come to urge
 thy crimes,
 I did not come to curse thee, Guine-
 vere,
 I, whose vast pity almost makes me die
 To see thee, laying there thy golden
 head,
 My pride in happier summers, at my
 feet.
 The wrath which forced my thoughts
 on that fierce law,
 The doom of treason and the flaming
 death,
 (When first I learnt thee hidden here)
 is past.
 The pang—which while I weigh'd thy
 heart with one

Too wholly true to dream untruth in
 thee,
 Made my tears burn—is also past—in
 part.
 And all is past, the sin is sinn'd,
 and I,
 Lo ! I forgive thee, as Eternal God
 Forgives : do thou for thine own soul
 the rest.
 But how to take last leave of all I
 loved ?
 O golden hair, with which I used to
 play
 Not knowing ! O imperial-moulded
 form,
 And beauty such as never woman wore,
 Until it came a kingdom's curse with
 thee—
 I cannot touch thy lips, they are not
 mine,
 But Lancelot's : nay, they never were
 the King's.
 I cannot take thy hand ; that too is
 flesh,
 And in the flesh thou hast sinn'd ; and
 mine own flesh,
 Here looking down on thine polluted,
 cries
 "I loathe thee:" yet not less, O
 Guinevere,
 For I was ever virgin save for thee,
 My love thro' flesh hath wrought into
 my life
 So far, that my doom is, I love thee
 still.
 Let no man dream but that I love
 thee still.
 Perchance, and so thou purify thy
 soul,
 And so thou lean on our fair father
 Christ,
 Hereafter in that world where all are
 pure
 We two may meet before high God,
 and thou
 Wilt spring to me, and claim me
 thine, and know
 I am thine husband—not a smaller
 soul,
 Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave
 me that,
 I charge thee, my last hope. Now
 must I hence.

Thro' the thick night I hear the
trumpet blow :
They summon me their King to lead
mine hosts
Far down to that great battle in the
west,
Where I must strike against the man
they call
My sister's son—no kin of mine, who
leagues
With Lords of the White Horse,
heathen, and knights,
Traitors—and strike him dead, and
meet myself
Death, or I know not what mysterious
doom.
And thou remaining here wilt learn
the event ;
But hither shall I never come again,
Never lie by thy side ; see thee no
more—
Farewell !'

And while she grovell'd at his feet,
She felt the King's breath wander
o'er her neck,
And in the darkness o'er her fallen
head,
Perceived the waving of his hands
that blest.

Then, listening till those armed
steps were gone,
Rose the pale Queen, and in her
anguish found
The casement : 'peradventure,' so she
thought,
'If I might see his face, and not
be seen.'
And lo, he sat on horseback at the
door !
And near him the sad nuns with each
a light
Stood, and he gave them charge
about the Queen,
To guard and foster her for ever-
more.
And while he spake to these his helm
was lower'd,
To which for crest the golden dragon
clung
Of Britain ; so she did not see the
face,

Which then was as an angel's, but she
saw,
Wet with the mists and smitten by
the lights,
The Dragon of the great Pendragon-
ship
Blaze, making all the night a steam of
fire.
And even then he turn'd ; and more
and more
The moony vapor rolling round the
King,
Who seem'd the phantom of a Giant
in it,
Enwound him fold by fold, and made
him gray
And grayer, till himself became as
mist
Before her, moving ghostlike to his
doom.

Then she stretch'd out her arms and
cried aloud
'Oh Arthur !' there her voice brake
suddenly,
Then—as a stream that spouting
from a cliff
Falls in mid air, but gathering at the
base
Re-makes itself, and flashes down the
vale—
Went on in passionate utterance :

'Gone—my lord !
Gone thro' my sin to slay and to be
slain !
And he forgave me, and I could not
speak.
Farewell ? I should have answer'd
his farewell.
His mercy choked me. Gone, my
lord the King,
My own true lord ! how dare I call
him mine ?
The shadow of another cleaves to me,
And makes me one pollution : he, the
King,
Call'd me polluted : shall I kill my-
self ?
What help in that ? I cannot kill
my sin,
If soul be soul ; nor can I kill my
shame ;

No, nor by living can I live it down.
 The days will grow to weeks, the
 weeks to months,
 The months will add themselves and
 make the years,
 The years will roll into the centuries,
 And mine will ever be a name of
 scorn.
 I must not dwell on that defeat of
 fame.
 Let the world be; that is but of
 the world;
 What else? what hope? I think
 there was a hope,
 Except he mock'd me when he spake
 of hope;
 His hope he call'd it; but he never
 mocks,
 For mockery is the fume of little
 hearts.
 And blessed be the King, who hath
 forgiven
 My wickedness to him, and left me
 hope
 That in mine own heart I can live
 down sin
 And be his mate hereafter in the
 heavens
 Before high God. Ah great and gen-
 tle lord,
 Who wast, as is the conscience of a
 saint
 Among his warring senses, to thy
 knights—
 To whom my false voluptuous pride,
 that took
 Full easily all impressions from
 below,
 Would not look up, or half-despised
 the height
 To which I would not or I could not
 climb—
 I thought I could not breathe in that
 fine air
 That pure severity of perfect light—
 I yearn'd for warmth and color which
 I found
 In Lancelot—now I see thee what
 thou art,
 Thou art the highest and most human
 too,
 Not Lancelot, nor another. Is there
 none

Will tell the King I love him tho' so
 late?
 Now—ere he goes to the great Battle?
 none:
 Myself must tell him in that purer
 life,
 But now it were too daring. Ah my
 God,
 What might I not have made of thy
 fair world,
 Had I but loved thy highest creature
 here?
 It was my duty to have loved the
 highest:
 It surely was my profit had I known:
 It would have been my pleasure had
 I seen.
 We needs must love the highest when
 we see it,
 Not Lancelot, nor another.'

Here her hand
 Grasp'd, made her vail her eyes: she
 look'd and saw
 The novice, weeping, suppliant, and
 said to her,
 'Yea, little maid, for am I not for-
 given?'
 Then glancing up beheld the holy
 nuns
 All round her, weeping; and her
 heart was loosed
 Within her, and she wept with these
 and said,

'Ye know me then, that wicked
 one, who broke
 The vast design and purpose of the
 King.
 O shut me round with narrowing
 nunnery-walls,
 Meek maidens, from the voices cry-
 ing "shame."
 I must not scorn myself: he loves me
 still.
 Let no one dream but that he loves
 me still.
 So let me, if you do not shudder at
 me,
 Nor shun to call me sister, dwell with
 you;
 Wear black and white, and be a nun
 like you,

Fast with your fasts, not feasting with
 your feasts;
 Grieve with your griefs, not grieving
 at your joys,
 But not rejoicing; mingle with your
 rites;
 Pray and be pray'd for; lie before
 your shrines;
 Do each low office of your holy
 house;
 Walk your dim cloister, and distribute
 dole
 To poor sick people, richer in His eyes
 Who ransom'd us and haler too than
 I;
 And treat their loathsome hurts and
 heal mine own;
 And so wear out in almsdeed and in
 prayer
 The sombre close of that voluptuous
 day,

Which wrought the ruin of my lord
 the King.'

She said: they took her to them-
 selves; and she
 Still hoping, fearing 'is it yet too
 late?'
 Dwelt with them, till in time their
 Abbess died.
 Then she, for her good deeds and her
 pure life,
 And for the power of ministration in
 her,
 And likewise for the high rank she
 had borne,
 Was chosen Abbess, there, an Abbess,
 lived
 For three brief years, and there, an
 Abbess, past
 To where beyond these voices there is
 peace.

End of 'The Round Table.'

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR.

THAT story which the bold Sir Bedi-
 vere,
 First made and latest left of all the
 knights,
 Told, when the man was no more than
 a voice
 In the white winter of his age, to
 those
 With whom he dwelt, new faces, other
 minds.

For on their march to westward,
 Bedivere,
 Who slowly paced among the slum-
 bering host,
 Heard in his tent the moanings of the
 King:

'I found Him in the shining of the
 stars,
 I mark'd Him in the flowering of His
 fields,
 But in His ways with men I find Him
 not.
 I waged His wars, and now I pass and
 die.

O me! for why is all around us here
 As if some lesser god had made the
 world,
 But had not force to shape it as he
 would,
 Till the High God behold it from be-
 yond,
 And enter it, and make it beautiful?
 Or else as if the world were wholly
 fair,
 But that these eyes of men are dense
 and dim,
 And have not power to see it as
 it is:
 Perchance, because we see not to the
 close;—
 For I, being simple, thought to work
 His will,
 And have but stricken with the sword
 in vain;
 And all whereon I lean'd in wife and
 friend
 Is traitor to my peace, and all my
 realm
 Reels back into the beast, and is no
 more.

My God, thou hast forgotten me in
my death:
Nay—God my Christ—I pass but
shall not die.’

Then, ere that last weird battle in
the west,
There came on Arthur sleeping,
Gawain kill’d
In Lancelot’s war, the ghost of Gawain
blown
Along a wandering wind, and past his
ear
Went shrilling, ‘Hollow, hollow all
delight!
Hail, King! to-morrow thou shalt pass
away.
Farewell! there is an isle of rest for
thee.
And I am blown along a wandering
wind,
And hollow, hollow, hollow all de-
light.’
And fainter onward, like wild birds
that change
Their season in the night and wail
their way
From cloud to cloud, down the long
wind the dream
Shrill’d; but in going mingled with
dim cries
Far in the moonlit haze among the
hills,
As of some lonely city sack’d by night,
When all is lost, and wife and child
with wail
Pass to new lords; and Arthur woke
and call’d,
‘Who spake? A dream. O light
upon the wind,
Thine, Gawain, was the voice—are
these dim cries
Thine? or doth all that haunts the
waste and wild
Mourn, knowing it will go along with
me?’

This heard the bold Sir Bedivere
and spake:
‘O me, my King, let pass whatever
will,
Elves, and the harmless glamour of
the field;

But in their stead thy name and glory
cling
To all high places like a golden
cloud
For ever: but as yet thou shalt not
pass.
Light was Gawain in life, and light in
death
Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the
man;
And care not thou for dreams from
him, but rise—
I hear the steps of Modred in the
west,
And with him many of thy people, and
knights
Once thine, whom thou hast loved,
but grosser grown
Than heathen, spitting at their vows
and thee.
Right well in heart they know thee for
the King.
Arise, go forth and conquer as of old.’

Then spake King Arthur to Sir
Bedivere:
‘Far other is this battle in the west
Whereto we move, than when we
strove in youth,
And brake the petty kings, and fought
with Rome,
Or thrust the heathen from the
Roman wall,
And shook him thro’ the north. Ill
doom is mine
To war against my people and my
knights.
The king who fights his people fights
himself.
And they my knights, who loved me
once, the stroke
That strikes them dead is as my death
to me.
Yet let us hence, and find or feel a
way
Thro’ this blind haze, which ever since
I saw
One lying in the dust at Almesbury,
Hath folded in the passes of the
world.’

Then rose the King and moved his
host by night,

And ever push'd Sir Modred, league
 by league,
 Back to the sunset bound of Lyon-
 nesse—
 A land of old upheaven from the
 abyss
 By fire, to sink into the abyss again;
 Where fragments of forgotten peoples
 dwelt,
 And the long mountains ended in a
 coast
 Of ever-shifting sand, and far away
 The phantom circle of a moaning sea.
 There the pursuer could pursue no
 more,
 And he that fled no further fly the
 King;
 And there, that day when the great
 light of heaven
 Burn'd at his lowest in the rolling
 year,
 On the waste sand by the waste sea
 they closed.
 Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a
 fight
 Like this last, dim, weird battle of the
 west.
 A deathwhite mist slept over sand
 and sea:
 Whereof the chill, to him who
 breathed it, drew
 Down with his blood, till all his heart
 was cold
 With formless fear; and ev'n on Ar-
 thur fell
 Confusion, since he saw not whom he
 fought.
 For friend and foe were shadows in
 the mist,
 And friend slew friend not knowing
 whom he slew;
 And some had visions out of golden
 youth,
 And some beheld the faces of old
 ghosts
 Look in upon the battle; and in the
 mist
 Was many a noble deed, many a base,
 And chance and craft and strength in
 single fights,
 And ever and anon with host to host
 Shocks, and the splintering spear, the
 hard mail hewn,

Shield-breakings, and the clash of
 brands, the crash
 Of battleaxes on shatter'd helms, and
 shrieks
 After the Christ, of those who falling
 down
 Look'd up for heaven, and only saw
 the mist;
 And shouts of heathen and the traitor
 knights,
 Oaths, insult, filth, and monstrous
 blasphemies,
 Sweat, writhings, anguish, laboring of
 the lungs
 In that close mist, and cryings for the
 light,
 Moans of the dying, and voices of the
 dead.

Last, as by some one deathbed after
 wail
 Of suffering, silence follows, or thro'
 death
 Or deathlike swoon, thus over all that
 shore,
 Save for some whisper of the seething
 seas,
 A dead hush fell; but when the dolor-
 ous day,
 Grew drearier toward twilight falling,
 came
 A bitter wind, clear from the North,
 and blew
 The mist aside, and with that wind the
 tide
 Rose, and the pale King glanced
 across the field
 Of battle: but no man was moving
 there;
 Nor any cry of Christian heard
 thereon,
 Nor yet of heathen; only the wan
 wave
 Brake in among dead faces, to and
 fro
 Swaying the helpless hands, and up
 and down
 Tumbling the hollow helmets of the
 fallen,
 And shiver'd brands that once had
 fought with Rome,
 And rolling far along the gloomy
 shores

The voice of days of old and days to be.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere,
And whiter than the mist that all day long
Had held the field of battle was the King:

‘Hearest thou this great voice that shakes the world,
And wastes the narrow realm whereon we move,
And beats upon the faces of the dead,
My dead, as tho’ they had not died for me?—
O Bedivere, for on my heart hath fall’n
Confusion, till I know not what I am,
Nor whence I am, nor whether I be King.
Behold, I seem but King among the dead.’

Then spake the bold Sir Bedivere:
‘My King,
King everywhere! and so the dead have kings,
There also will I worship thee as King.
Yet still thy life is whole, and still I live
Who love thee; but who hates thee, he that brought
The heathen back among us, yonder stands,
Modred, unharm’d, the traitor of thine house.’

Then spake the King: ‘My house hath been my doom.
But call not thou this traitor of my house
Who hath but dwelt beneath one roof with me.
My house are rather they who swear my vows,
Yea, even while they brake them, own’d me King.
And well for thee, saying in my dark hour,

When all the purport of my throne hath fail’d,
That quick or dead thou holdest me for King.
King am I, whatsoever be their cry;
And one last act of kinghood shalt thou see
Yet, ere I pass.’ And uttering this the King
Made at the man: then Modred smote his liege
Hard on that helm which many a heathen sword
Had beaten thin; while Arthur at one blow,
Striking the last stroke with Excalibur,
Slew him, and all but slain himself, he fell.

So all day long the noise of battle roll’d
Among the mountains by the winter sea;
Until King Arthur’s Table, man by man,
Had fall’n in Lyonesse about their lord,
King Arthur. Then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land:
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
‘The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record.
Such a sleep
They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,

Walking about the gardens and the
halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I
made,—
Tho' Merlin sware that I should
come again
To rule once more; but, let what will
be, be,
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last till
morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excali-
bur,
Which was my pride: for thou re-
memberest how
In those old days, one summer noon,
an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the
lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-
derful,
Holding the sword—and how I row'd
across
And took it, and have worn it, like a
king;
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known:
But now delay not: take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle
mere:
Watch what thou seest, and lightly
bring me word.'

To him replied the bold Sir Bedi-
vere:
'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee
thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the
helm—
A little thing may harm a wounded
man;
Yet I thy hest will all perform at
full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring
thee word.'

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he
stept
And in the moon athwart the place of
tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of an-
cient men,

Old knights, and over them the sea-
wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He,
stepping down
By zigzag paths, and juts of pointed
rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Ex-
calibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter
moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud,
ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against
the hilt:
For all the haft twinkled with diamond
sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-
work
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so
long
That both his eyes were dazzled as he
stood,
This way and that dividing the swift
mind,
In act to throw: but at the last it
seem'd
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
There in the many-knotted waterflags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the
marge.
So strode he back slow to the
wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir
Bedivere:
'Hast thou perform'd my mission
which I gave?
What is it thou hast seen? or what
hast heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bed-
ivere:
'I heard the ripple washing in the
reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the
crag.'

To whom replied King Arthur,
faint and pale:
'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and
thy name,

Not rendering true answer, as be-
seem'd
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight:
For surer sign had follow'd, either
hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the
'mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to
lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go
again,
As thou art lief and dear, and do the
thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring
me word.'

Then went Sir Bedivere the second
time
Across the ridge, and paced beside
the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in
thought;
But when he saw the wonder of the
hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased,
he smote
His palms together, and he cried
aloud:

'And if indeed I cast the brand
away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy
note,
Should thus be lost forever from the
earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of
many men.
What good should follow this, if this
were done?
What harm, undone? Deep harm to
disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king
demand
An act unprofitable, against himself?
The King is sick, and knows not
what he does.
What record, or what relic of my
lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty
breath
And rumors of a doubt? But were
this kept,

Stored in some treasure-house of
mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of
arms,
Saying, "King Arthur's sword, Excal-
ibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the
Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in
the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills."
So might some old man speak in the
after-time
To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honor and much fame
were lost.'

So spake he, clouded with his own
conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the
wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing
heavily:
'What is it thou hast seen? or what
hast heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bed-
ivere:
'I heard the water lapping on the
crag,
And the long ripple washing in the
reeds.'

To whom replied King Arthur,
much in wrath:
'Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is
me!
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
That bow'd the will. I see thee what
thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my
knights,
In whom should meet the offices of
all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the
precious hilt;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the
eyes.

Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get
thee hence :

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my
hands.'

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere,
and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly,
plunged
Among the bulrush beds, and clutch'd
the sword,

And strongly wheel'd and threw it.
The great brand

Made lightnings in the splendor of
the moon,

And flashing round and round, and
whirl'd in an arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern
morn,

Seen where the moving isles of winter
shock

By night, with noises of the Northern
Sea.

So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur :

But ere he dipt the surface, rose an
arm

Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-
derful,

And caught him by the hilt, and
brandish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in
the mere.

And lightly went the other to the
King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing
thicker breath :

'Now see I by thine eyes that this is
done.

Speak out : what is it thou hast heard,
or seen ?'

And answer made the bold Sir
Bedivere :

'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest
the gems

Should blind my purpose, for I never
saw,

Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I
die,

Not tho' I live three lives of mortal
men,

So great a miracle as yonder hilt.

Then with both hands I flung him,
wheeling him ;

But when I look'd again, behold an
arm,

Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-
derful,

That caught him by the hilt, and
brandish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in
the mere.'

And answer made King Arthur,
breathing hard :

'My end draws nigh ; 'tis time that I
were gone.

Make broad thy shoulders to receive
my weight,

And bear me to the margin ; yet I
fear

My wound hath taken cold, and I
shall die.'

So saying, from the pavement he half
rose,

Slowly, with pain, reclining on his
arm,

And looking wistfully with wide blue
eyes

As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,

And would have spoken, but he found
not words ;

Then took with care, and kneeling on
one knee,

O'er both his shoulders drew the lan-
guid hands,

And rising bore him thro' the place of
tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur
panted hard,

Like one that feels a nightmare on
his bed

When all the house is mute. So
sigh'd the King,

Muttering and murmuring at his ear,
'Quick, quick !

I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'

But the other swiftly strode fro-
ridge to ridge,



"THE VOICE OF THE DEAD WAS A LIVING VOICE TO ME."—*Page 106.*

Clothed with his breath, and looking,
as he walk'd,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a
cry
Before. His own thought drove him
like a goad.
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy
caves
And barren chasms, and all to left
and right
The bare black cliff clang'd round
him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that
rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed
heels—
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter
moon.

Then saw they how there hove a
dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to
stern,
Beneath them; and descending they
were ware
That all the decks were dense with
stately forms,
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a
dream—by these
Three Queens with crowns of gold :
and from them rose
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling
stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind that
shrills
All night in a waste land, where no
one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the
world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me
in the barge.'
So to the barge they came. There
those three Queens
Put forth their hands, and took the
King, and wept.
But she, that rose the tallest of them
all
And fairest, laid his head upon her
lap,

And loosed the shatter'd casque, and
chafed his hands,
And call'd him by his name, complain-
ing loud,
And dropping bitter tears against a
brow
Striped with dark blood: for all his
face was white
And colorless, and like the wither'd
moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the
springing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd
with drops
Of onset; and the light and lustrous
curls—
That made his forehead like a rising
sun
High from the daïs-throne—were
parch'd with dust;
Or, clotted into points and hanging
loose,
Mix'd with the knightly growth that
fringed his lips.
So like a shatter'd column lay the
King;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance
in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tourna-
ment,
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and
charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bed-
ivere :
'Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall
I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and
my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are
dead,
When every morning brought a noble
chance,
And every chance brought out a noble
knight.
Such times have been not since the
light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole Round Table is
dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty
world,

And I, the last, go forth companion-
less,
And the days darken round me, and
the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other
minds.'

And slowly answer'd Arthur from
the barge:
'The old order changeth, yielding
place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt
the world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in
me?
I have lived my life, and that which I
have done
May He within himself make pure!
but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face
again,
Pray for my soul. More things are
wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Where-
fore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and
day.
For what are men better than sheep
or goats
That nourish a blind life within the
brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands
of prayer
Both for themselves and those who
call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every
way
Bound by gold chains about the feet
of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long
way
With these thou seest—if indeed I
go
(For all my mind is clouded with a
doubt)—
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any
snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it
lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with
orchard lawns

And bowery hollows crown'd with
summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous
wound.'

So said he, and the barge with oar
and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-
breasted swan
That, fluting a wild carol ere her
death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes
the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir
Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the
hull
Look'd one black dot against the
verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died
away.

But when that moan had past for
evermore,
The stillness of the dead world's win-
ter dawn
Amazed him, and he groan'd, 'The
King is gone.'
And therewithal came on him the
weird rhyme,
'From the great deep to the great
deeps he goes.'

Whereat he slowly turn'd and
slowly clomb
The last hard footstep of that iron
crag;
Thence mark'd the black hull moving
yet, and cried,
'He passes to be King among the
dead,
And after healing of his grievous
wound
He comes again; but—if he come no
more—
O me, be yon dark Queens in yon
black boat,
Who shriek'd and wail'd, the three
whereat we gazed
On that high day, when, clothed with
living light,
They stood before his throne in si-
lence, friends

Of Arthur, who should help him at his
need?’

Then from the dawn it seem’d there
came, but faint
As from beyond the limit of the world,
Like the last echo born of a great cry,
Sounds, as if some fair city were one
voice
Around a king returning from his
wars.

Thereat once more he moved about,
and clomb

Ev’n to the highest he could climb,
and saw,
Straining his eyes beneath an arch of
hand,
Or thought he saw, the speck that
bare the King,
Down that long water opening on the
deep
Somewhere far off, pass on and on,
and go
From less to less and vanish into
light.
And the new sun rose bringing the
new year.

TO THE QUEEN.

O LOYAL to the royal in thyself,
And loyal to thy land, as this to
thee—
Bear witness, that rememberable day,
When, pale as yet, and fever-worn,
the Prince
Who scarce had pluck’d his flickering
life again
From halfway down the shadow of
the grave,
Past with thee thro’ thy people and
their love,
And London roll’d one tide of joy
thro’ all
Her trebled millions, and loud leagues
of man
And welcome! witness, too, the si-
lent cry,
The prayer of many a race and creed,
and clime—
Thunderless lightnings striking under
sea
From sunset and sunrise of all thy
realm,
And that true North, whereof we
lately heard
A strain to shame us ‘keep you to
yourselves;
So loyal is too costly! friends—your
love
Is but a burthen: loose the bond, and
go.’
Is this the tone of empire? here the
faith

That made us rulers? this, indeed, her
voice
And meaning, whom the roar of Hou-
goumont
Left mightiest of all peoples under
heaven?
What shock has fool’d her since, that
she should speak
So feebly? wealthier—wealthier—
hour by hour!
The voice of Britain, or a sinking
land,
Some third-rate isle half-lost among
her seas?
There rang her voice, when the full
city peal’d
Thee and thy Prince! The loyal to
their crown
Are loyal to their own far sons, who
love
Our ocean-empire with her boundless
homes
For ever-broadening England, and her
throne
In our vast Orient, and one isle, one
isle,
That knows not her own greatness:
if she knows
And dreads it we are fall’n.—But
thou, my Queen,
Not for itself, but thro’ thy living love
For one to whom I made it o’er his
grave
Sacred, except this old imperfect tale,

New-old, and shadowing Sense at war
 with Soul
 Rather than that gray king, whose
 name, a ghost,
 Streams like a cloud, man-shaped,
 from mountain peak,
 And cleaves to cairn and cromlech
 still; or him
 Of Geoffrey's book, or him of Mall-
 eor's, one
 Touch'd by the adulterous finger of a
 time
 That hover'd between war and wan-
 tonness,
 And crownings and dethronements:
 take withal
 Thy poet's blessing, and his trust that
 Heaven
 Will blow the tempest in the distance
 back
 From thine and ours: for some are
 scared, who mark,
 Or wisely or unwisely, signs of storm,
 Waverings of every vane with every
 wind,
 And wordy trucklings to the transient
 hour,
 And fierce or careless looseners of
 the faith,

And Softness breeding scorn of sim-
 ple life,
 Or Cowardice, the child of lust for
 gold,
 Or Labor, with a groan and not a
 voice,
 Or Art with poisonous honey stol'n
 from France,
 And that which knows, but careful for
 itself,
 And that which knows not, ruling that
 which knows
 To its own harm: the goal of this
 great world
 Lies beyond sight: yet—if our slowly-
 grown
 And crown'd Republic's crowning
 common-sense,
 That saved her many times, not fail—
 their fears
 Are morning shadows huger than the
 shapes
 That cast them, not those gloomier
 which forego
 The darkness of that battle in the
 West,
 Where all of high and holy dies
 away.

THE LOVER'S TALE.

THE original Preface to 'The Lover's Tale' states that it was composed in my nineteenth year. Two only of the three parts then written were printed, when, feeling the imperfection of the poem, I withdrew it from the press. One of my friends however who, boy-like, admired the boy's work, distributed among our common associates of that hour some copies of these two parts, without my knowledge, without the omissions and amendments which I had in contemplation, and marred by the many misprints of the compositor. Seeing that these two parts have of late been mercilessly pirated, and that what I had deemed scarce worthy to live is not allowed to die, may I not be pardoned if I suffer the whole poem at last to come into the light—accompanied with a reprint of the sequel—a work of my mature life—'The Golden Supper'?

May, 1879.

ARGUMENT.

JULIAN, whose cousin and foster-sister, Camilla, has been wedded to his friend and rival, Lionel, endeavors to narrate the story of his own love for her, and the strange sequel. He speaks (in Parts II. and III.) of having been haunted by visions and the sound of bells, tolling for a funeral, and at last ringing for a marriage; but he breaks away, overcome, as he approaches the Event, and a witness to it completes the tale.

I.

HERE far away, seen from the top-
most cliff,
Filling with purple gloom the vacan-
cies
Between the tufted hills, the sloping
seas
Hung in mid-heaven, and half-way
down rare sails,
White as white clouds, floated from
sky to sky.
Oh! pleasant breast of waters, quiet
bay,
Like to a quiet mind in the loud
world,
Where the chafed breakers of the
outer sea
Sank powerless, as anger falls aside
And withers on the breast of peaceful
love;
Thou didst receive the growth of
pines that fledged
The hills that watch'd thee, as Love
watcheth Love,
In thine own essence, and delight thy-
self
To make it wholly thine on sunny
days.

Keep thou thy name of 'Lover's
Bay.' See, sirs,
Even now the Goddess of the Past,
that takes
The heart, and sometimes touches but
one string
That quivers, and is silent, and some-
times
Sweeps suddenly all its half-moulder'd
chords
To some old melody, begins to
play
That air which pleased her first. I
feel thy breath;
I come, great Mistress of the ear and
eye:
Thy breath is of the pinewood; and
tho' years
Have hollow'd out a deep and stormy
strait
Betwixt the native land of Love and
me,
Breathe but a little on me, and the
sail
Will draw me to the rising of the
sun,
The lucid chambers of the morning
star,
And East of Life.

Permit me, friend, I prythee,
 To pass my hand across my brows,
 and muse
 On those dear hills, that never more
 will meet
 The sight, that throbs and aches be-
 neath my touch,
 As tho' there beat a heart in either
 eye;
 For when the outer lights are darken'd
 thus,
 The memory's vision hath a keener
 edge.
 It grows upon me now—the semicircle
 Of dark-blue waters and the narrow
 fringe
 Of curving beach—its wreaths of
 dripping green—
 Its pale pink shells—the summerhouse
 aloft
 That open'd on the pines with doors
 of glass,
 A mountain nest—the pleasure-boat
 that rock'd,
 Light-green with its own shadow, keel
 to keel,
 Upon the dappled dimplings of the
 wave,
 That blanch'd upon its side.

O Love, O Hope!
 They come, they crowd upon me all
 at once—
 Moved from the cloud of forgotten
 things,
 That sometimes on the horizon of the
 mind
 Lies folded, often sweeps athwart in
 storm—
 Flash upon flash they lighten thro'
 me—days
 Of dewy dawning and the amber
 eyes
 When thou and I, Camilla, thou and
 I
 Were borne about the bay or safely
 moor'd
 Beneath a low-brow'd cavern, where
 the tide
 Splash'd, sapping its worn ribs; and all
 without
 The slowly-riding rollers on the
 cliffs

Clash'd, calling to each other, and
 thro' the arch
 Down those loud waters, like a set-
 ting star,
 Mixt with the gorgeous west the
 lighthouse shone,
 And silver-smiling Venus ere she fell
 Would often loiter in her balmy blue,
 To crown it with herself.

Here, too, my love
 Waver'd at anchor with me, when
 day hung
 From his mid-dome in Heaven's airy
 halls;
 Gleams of the water-circles as they
 broke,
 Flicker'd like doubtful smiles about
 her lips,
 Quiver'd a flying glory on her hair,
 Leapt like a passing thought across
 her eyes;
 And mine with one that will not pass,
 till earth
 And heaven pass too, dwelt on my
 heaven, a face
 Most starry-fair, but kindled from
 within
 As 'twere with dawn. She was dark
 hair'd, dark-eyed:
 Oh, such dark eyes! a single glance
 of them
 Will govern a whole life from birth
 to death,
 Careless of all things else, led on with
 light
 In trances and in visions: look at
 them,
 You lose yourself in utter ignorance;
 You cannot find their depth; for they
 go back,
 And farther back, and still withdraw
 themselves
 Quite into the deep soul, that ever-
 more
 Fresh springing from her fountains in
 the brain,
 Still pouring thro', floods with re-
 dundant life
 Her narrow portals.

Trust me, long ago
 I should have died, if it were possible

To die in gazing on that perfectness
Which I do bear within me: I had
died,
But from my farthest lapse, my latest
ebb,
Thine image, like a charm of light
and strength
Upon the waters, push'd me back
again
On these deserted sands of barren
life.
Tho' from the deep vault where the
heart of Hope
Fell into dust, and crumbled in the
dark—
Forgetting how to render beautiful
Her countenance with quick and
healthful blood—
Thou didst not sway me upward;
could I perish
While thou, a meteor of the sepul-
chre,
Didst swathe thyself all round Hope's
quiet urn
For ever? He, that saith it, hath
o'er-stept
The 'slippery footing of his narrow
wit,
And fall'n away from judgment.
Thou art light,
To which my spirit leaneth all her
flowers,
And length of days, and immortal-
ity
Of thought, and freshness ever self-
renew'd.
For Time and Grief abode too long
with Life,
And, like all other friends i' the
world, at last
They grew weary of her fellowship:
So Time and Grief did beckon unto
Death,
And Death drew nigh and beat the
doors of Life;
But thou didst sit alone in the inner
house,
A wakeful portress, and didst parle
with Death,
'This is a charmed dwelling which I
hold;'
So Death gave back, and would no
further come.

Yet is my life nor in the present
time,
Nor in the present place. To me
alone,
Push'd from his chair of regal herit-
age.
The Present is the vassal of the
Past:
So that, in that I *have* lived, do I
live,
And cannot die, and am, in having
been—
A portion of the pleasant yesterday,
Thrust forward on to-day and out of
place;
A body journeying onward, sick with
toil,
The weight as if of age upon my
limbs,
The grasp of hopeless grief about my
heart,
And all the senses weaken'd, save in
that,
Which long ago they had glean'd
and garner'd up
Into the granaries of memory—
The clear brow, bulwark of the pre-
cious brain,
Chink'd as you see, and seam'd—and
all the while
The light soul twines and mingles
with the growths
Of vigorous early days, attracted,
won,
Married, made one with, molten into
all
The beautiful in Past of act or
place,
And like the all-enduring camel,
driven
Far from the diamond fountain by
the palms,
Who toils across the middle moonlit
nights,
Or when the white heats of the blind-
ing noons
Beat from the concave sand; yet in
him keeps
A draught of that sweet fountain
that he loves,
To stay his feet from falling, and his
spirit
From bitterness of death.

Ye ask me, friends,
 When I began to love. How should
 I tell you?
 Or from the after-fulness of my heart,
 Flow back again unto my slender
 spring
 And first of love, tho' every turn and
 depth
 Between is clearer in my life than
 all
 Its present flow. Ye know not what
 ye ask.
 How should the broad and open
 flower tell
 What sort of bud it was, when, prest
 together
 In its green sheath, close-lapt in
 silken folds,
 It seem'd to keep its sweetness to it-
 self,
 Yet was not the less sweet for that it
 seem'd?
 For young Life knows not when
 young Life was born,
 But takes it all for granted: neither
 Love,
 Warm in the heart, his cradle, can re-
 member
 Love in the womb, but resteth satis-
 fied,
 Looking on her that brought him to
 the light:
 Or as men know not when they fall
 asleep
 Into delicious dreams, our other life,
 So know I not when I began to love.
 This is my sum of knowledge—that
 my love
 Grew with myself—say rather, was
 my growth,
 My inward sap, the hold I have on
 earth,
 My outward circling air wherewith I
 breathe,
 Which yet upholds my life, and ever-
 more
 Is to me daily life and daily death:
 For how should I have lived and not
 have loved?
 Can ye take off the sweetness from
 the flower,
 The color and the sweetness from the
 rose,

And place them by themselves; or
 set apart
 Their motions and their brightness
 from the stars,
 And then point out the flower or the
 star?
 Or build a wall betwixt my life and
 love,
 And tell me where I am? 'Tis even
 thus:
 In that I live I love; because I love
 I live: whate'er is fountain to the one
 Is fountain to the other; and when-
 e'er
 Our God unknits the riddle of the
 one,
 There is no shade or fold of mystery
 Swathing the other.

Many, many years,
 (For they seem many and my most of
 life,
 And well I could have linger'd in
 that porch,
 So unproportion'd to the dwelling-
 place,)
 In the Maydews of childhood, oppo-
 site
 The flush and dawn of youth, we
 lived together,
 Apart, alone together on those hills.

Before he saw my day my father
 died,
 And he was happy that he saw it not;
 But I and the first daisy on his grave
 From the same clay came into light at
 once.
 As Love and I do number equal
 years,
 So she, my love, is of an age with me.
 How like each other was the birth of
 each!
 On the same morning, almost the
 same hour,
 Under the selfsame aspect of the
 stars,
 (Oh falsehood of all starcraft!) we
 were born.
 How like each other was the birth of
 each!
 The sister of my mother—she that
 bore

Camilla close beneath her beating
heart,
Which to the imprison'd spirit of the
child,
With its true-touched pulses in the
flow
And hourly visitation of the blood,
Sent notes of preparation manifold,
And mellow'd echoes of the outer
world—
My mother's sister, mother of my
love,
Who had a twofold claim upon my
heart,
One twofold mightier than the other
was,
In giving so much beauty to the
world,
And so much wealth as God had
charged her with—
Loathing to put it from herself for
ever,
Left her own life with it; and dying
thus,
Crown'd with her highest act the
placid face
And breathless body of her good
deeds past.

So were we born, so orphan'd.
She was motherless
And I without a father. So from
each
Of those two pillars which from earth
uphold
Our childhood, one had fallen away,
and all
The careful burthen of our tender
years
Trembled upon the other. He that
gave
Her life, to me delightedly fulfill'd
All lovingkindnesses, all offices
Of watchful care and trembling ten-
derness.
He waked for both: he pray'd for
both: he slept
Dreaming of both: nor was his love
the less
Because it was divided, and shot
forth
Boughs on each side, laden with
wholesome shade,

Wherein we nested sleeping or
awake,
And sang aloud the matin-song of
life.

She was my foster-sister: on one
arm
The flaxen ringlets of our infancies
Wander'd, the while we rested: one
soft lap
Pillow'd us both: a common light of
eyes
Was on us as we lay: our baby lips,
Kissing one bosom, ever drew from
thence
The stream of life, one stream, one
life, one blood,
One sustenance, which, still as
thought grew large,
Still larger moulding all the house of
thought,
Made all our tastes and fancies like,
perhaps—
All—all but one; and strange to me,
and sweet,
Sweet thro' strange years to know
that whatsoever
Our general mother meant for me
alone,
Our mutual mother dealt to both of
us:
So what was earliest mine in earliest
life,
I shared with her in whom myself
remains.
As was our childhood, so our in-
fancy,
They tell me, was a very miracle
Of fellow-feeling and communion.
They tell me that we would not be
alone,—
We cried when we were parted; when
I wept,
Her smile lit up the rainbow on my
tears,
Stay'd on the cloud of sorrow; that
we loved
The sound of one-another's voices
more
Than the gray cuckoo loves his name,
and learn'd
To lisp in tune together; that we
slept

In the same cradle always, face to face.
 Heart beating time to heart, lip pressing lip,
 Folding each other, breathing on each other,
 Dreaming together (dreaming of each other
 They should have added), till the morning light
 Sloped thro' the pines, upon the dewy pane
 Falling, unseal'd our eyelids, and we woke
 To gaze upon each other. If this be true,
 At thought of which my whole soul languishes
 And faints, and hath no pulse, no breath—as tho'
 A man in some still garden should infuse
 Rich atar in the bosom of the rose,
 Till, drunk with its own wine, and overfull
 Of sweetness, and in smelling of itself,
 It fall on its own thorns—if this be true—
 And that way my wish leads me evermore
 Still to believe it—'tis so sweet a thought,
 Why in the utter stillness of the soul
 Doth question'd memory answer not, nor tell
 Of this our earliest, our closest-drawn,
 Most loveliest, earthly-heavenliest harmony?
 O blossom'd portal of the lonely house,
 Green prelude, April promise, glad new-year
 Of Being, which with earliest violets
 And lavish carol of clear-throated larks
 Fill'd all the March of life!—I will not speak of thee,
 These have not seen thee, these can never know thee,
 They cannot understand me. Pass we then

A term of eighteen years. Ye would but laugh,
 If I should tell you how I hoard in thought
 The faded rhymes and scraps of ancient crones,
 Gray relics of the nurseries of the world,
 Which are as gems set in my memory,
 Because she learnt them with me; or what use
 To know her father left us just before
 The daffodil was blown? or how we found
 The dead man cast upon the shore?
 All this
 Seems to the quiet daylight of your minds
 But cloud and smoke, and in the dark of mine.
 Is traced with flame. Move with me to the event.
 There came a glorious morning, such a one
 As dawns but once a season. Mercury
 On such a morning would have flung himself
 From cloud to cloud, and swum with balanced wings
 To some tall mountain: when I said to her,
 'A day for Gods to stoop,' she answered, 'Ay,
 And men to soar:' for as that other gazed,
 Shading his eyes till all the fiery cloud,
 The prophet and the chariot and the steeds,
 Suck'd into oneness like a little star
 Were drunk into the inmost blue, we stood,
 When first we came from out the pines at noon,
 With hands for eaves, uplooking and almost
 Waiting to see some blessed shape in heaven,
 So bathed we were in brilliance. Never yet
 Before or after have I known the spring

Pour with such sudden deluges of
light
Into the middle summer; for that
day
Love, rising, shook his wings, and
charged the winds
With spiced May-sweets from bound
to bound, and blew
Fresh fire into the sun, and from
within
Burst thro' the heated buds, and sent
his soul
Into the songs of birds, and touch'd
far-off
His mountain-altars, his high hills,
with flame
Milder and purer.

Thro' the rocks we wound:
The great pine shook with lonely
sounds of joy
That came on the sea-wind. As
mountain streams
Our bloods ran free: the sunshine
seem'd to brood
More warmly on the heart than on
the brow.
We often paused, and, looking back,
we saw
The clefts and openings in the moun-
tains fill'd
With the blue valley and the glisten-
ing brooks,
And all the low dark groves, a land
of love!
A land of promise, a land of mem-
ory,
A land of promise flowing with the
milk
And honey of delicious memories!
And down to sea, and far as eye could
ken,
Each way from verge to verge a Holy
Land,
Still growing holier as you near'd the
bay,
For there the Temple stood.

When we had reach'd
The grassy platform on some hill, I
stoop'd,
I gather'd the wild herbs, and for her
brows

And mine made garlands of the self-
same flower,
Which she took smiling, and with my
work thus
Crown'd her clear forehead. Once or
twice she told me
(For I remember all things) to let
grow
The flowers that run poison in their
veins.
She said, 'The evil flourish in the
world.'
Then playfully she gave herself the
lie—
'Nothing in nature is unbeautiful;
So, brother, pluck and spare not.'
So I wove
Ev'n the dull-blooded poppy-stem,
'whose flower,
Hued with the scarlet of a fierce sun-
rise,
Like to the wild youth of an evil
prince,
Is without sweetness, but who crowns
himself
Above the naked poisons of his heart
In his old age.' A graceful thought
of hers
Grav'n on my fancy! And oh, how
like a nymph,
A stately mountain nymph she
look'd! how native
Unto the hills she trod on! While I
gazed
My coronal slowly disentwined itself
And fell between us both; tho' while
I gazed
My spirit leap'd as with those thrills
of bliss
That strike across the soul in prayer,
and show us
That we are surely heard. Methought
a light
Burst from the garland I had wov'n,
and stood
A solid glory on her bright black
hair;
A light methought broke from her
dark, dark eyes,
And shot itself into the singing
winds;
A mystic light flash'd ev'n from her
white robe

As from a glass in the sun, and fell
about
My footsteps on the mountains.

Last we came

To what our people call 'The Hill of
Woe.'

A bridge is there, that, look'd at from
beneath

Seems but a cobweb filament to link
The yawning of an earthquake-cloven
chasm.

And thence one night, when all the
winds were loud,

A woful man (for so the story went)
Had thrust his wife and child and
dash'd himself

Into the dizzy depth below. Below,
Fierce in the strength of far descent,
a stream

Flies with a shatter'd foam along the
chasm.

The path was perilous, loosely
strown with crags:

We mounted slowly; yet to both
there came

The joy of life in steepness overcome,
And victories of ascent, and looking
down

On all that had look'd down on us;
and joy

In breathing nearer heaven; and joy
to me,

High over all the azure-circled earth,
To breathe with her as if in heaven
itself;

And more than joy that I to her
became

Her guardian and her angel, raising
her

Still higher, past all peril, until she
saw

Beneath her feet the region far away,
Beyond the nearest mountain's bosky
brows,

Arise in open prospect—heath and
hill,

And hollow lined and wooded to the
lips,

And steep-down walls of battle-
mented rock

Gilded with broom, or shatter'd into
spires,

And glory of broad waters interfused,
Whence rose as it were breath and
steam of gold,

And over all the great wood rioting
And climbing, streak'd or starr'd at
intervals

With falling brook or blossom'd bush
—and last,

Framing the mighty landscape to the
west,

A purple range of mountain-cones,
between

Whose interspaces gush'd in blinding
bursts

The incorporate blaze of sun and
sea.

At length

Descending from the point and stand-
ing both,

There on the tremulous bridge, that
from beneath

Had seem'd a gossamer filament up
in air,

We paused amid the splendor. All
the west

And ev'n unto the middle south was
ribb'd

And barr'd with bloom on bloom.
The sun below,

Held for a space 'twixt cloud and
wave, shower'd down

Rays of a mighty circle, weaving over
That various wilderness a tissue of
light

Unparallel'd. On the other side, the
moon,

Half-melted into thin blue air, stood
still,

And pale and fibrous as a wither'd
leaf,

Nor yet endured in presence of His
eyes

To indue his lustre; most unlover-
like,

Since in his absence full of light and
joy,

And giving light to others. But this
most,

Next to her presence whom I loved
so well,

Spoke loudly even into my inmost
heart

As to my outward hearing: the loud
stream,
Forth issuing from his portals in the
crag
(A visible link unto the home of my
heart),
Ran amber toward the west, and nigh
the sea
Parting my own loved mountains was
received,
Shorn of its strength, into the sympathy
Of that small bay, which out to open
main
Glow'd intermingling close beneath
the sun.
Spirit of Love! that little hour was
bound
Shut in from Time, and dedicate to
thee:
Thy fires from heaven had touch'd it,
and the earth
They fell on became hallow'd ever-
more.

We turn'd: our eyes met: hers
were bright, and mine
Were dim with floating tears, that
shot the sunset
In lightnings round me; and my name
was borne
Upon her breath. Henceforth my
name has been
A hallow'd memory like the names of
old,
A center'd, glory-circled memory,
And a peculiar treasure, brooking not
Exchange or currency: and in that
hour
A hope flow'd round me, like a golden
mist
Charm'd amid eddies of melodious
airs,
A moment; ere the onward whirlwind
shatter it,
Waver'd and floated—which was less
than Hope,
Because it lack'd the power of perfect
Hope;
But which was more and higher than
all Hope,
Because all other Hope had lower
aim;

Even that this name to which her gra-
cious lips
Did lend such gentle utterance, this
one name,
In some obscure hereafter, might in-
wreathe
(How lovelier, nobler then!) her life,
her love,
With my life, love, soul, spirit, and
heart and strength.

'Brother,' she said, 'let this be
call'd henceforth
The Hill of Hope;' and I replied, 'O
sister,
My will is one with thine; the Hill of
Hope.'
Nevertheless, we did not change the
name.

I did not speak: I could not speak
my love.
Love lieth deep: Love dwells not in
lip-depths.
Love wraps his wings on either side
the heart,
Constraining it with kisses close and
warm,
Absorbing all the incense of sweet
thoughts
So that they pass not to the shrine of
sound.
Else had the life of that delighted
hour
Drunk in the largeness of the utter-
ance
Of Love; but how should Earthly
measure mete
The Heavenly-unmeasured or unlimi-
ted Love,
Who scarce can tune his high majestic
sense
Unto the thundersong that wheels the
spheres,
Scarce living in the Æolian harmony,
And flowing odor of the spacious air,
Scarce housed within the circle of
this Earth,
Be cabin'd up in words and syllables,
Which pass with that which breathes
them? Sooner Earth
Might go round Heaven, and the
strait girth of Time

Inswathe the fulness of Eternity,
Than language grasp the infinite of
Love.

O day which did enwomb that
happy hour,
Thou art blessed in the years, divin-
est day!
O Genius of that hour which dost up-
hold
Thy coronal of glory like a God,
Amid thy melancholy mates far-seen,
Who walk before thee, ever turning
round
To gaze upon thee till their eyes are
dim
With dwelling on the light and depth
of thine,
Thy name is ever worshipp'd among
hours!
Had I died then, I had not seem'd to
die,
For bliss stood round me like the
light of Heaven,—
Had I died then, I had not known the
death;
Yea had the Power from whose right
hand the light
Of Life issueth, and from whose left
hand floweth
The Shadow of Death, perennial efflu-
ences,
Whereof to all that draw the whole-
some air,
Somewhile the one must overflow the
other;
Then had he stemm'd my day with
night, and driven
My current to the fountain whence it
sprang,—
Even his own abiding excellence—
On me, methinks, that shock of gloom
had fall'n
Unfelt, and in this glory I had merged
The other, like the sun I gazed
upon,
Which seeming for the moment due
to death,
And dipping his head low beneath the
verge,
Yet bearing round about him his own
day,
In confidence of unabated strength,

Steppeth from Heaven to Heaven,
from light to light,
And holdeth his undimmed forehead
far
Into a clearer zenith, pure of cloud.

We trod the shadow of the down-
ward hill;
We past from light to dark. On the
other side
Is scoop'd a cavern and a mountain
hall,
Which none have fathom'd. If you
go far in
(The country people rumor) you
may hear
The moaning of the woman and the
child,
Shut in the secret chambers of the
rock.
I too have heard a sound—perchance
of streams
Running far on within its inmost
halls,
The home of darkness; but the cav-
ern-mouth,
Half overtrailed with a wanton weed,
Gives birth to a brawling brook, that
passing lightly
Adown a natural stair of tangled
roots,
Is presently received in a sweet grave
Of eglantines, a place of burial
Far lovelier than its cradle; for un-
seen,
But taken with the sweetness of the
place,
It makes a constant bubbling melody
That drowns the nearer echoes.
Lower down
Spreads out a little lake, that, flood-
ing, leaves
Low banks of yellow sand; and from
the woods
That belt it rise three dark, tall cy-
presses,—
Three cypresses, symbols of mortal
woe,
That men plant on graves.

Hither we came,
And sitting down upon the golden
moss,

Held converse sweet and low—low
 converse sweet,
 In which our voices bore least part.
 The wind
 Told a lovetale beside us, how he
 woo'd
 The waters, and the waters answering
 lisp'd
 To kisses of the wind, that, sick with
 love,
 Fainted at intervals, and grew again
 To utterance of passion. Ye cannot
 shape
 Fancy so fair as is this memory.
 Methought all excellence that ever
 was
 Had drawn herself from many thou-
 sand years,
 And all the separate Edens of this
 earth,
 To centre in this place and time. I
 listen'd,
 And her words stole with most pre-
 vailing sweetness
 Into my heart, as thronging fancies
 come
 To boys and girls when summer days
 are new,
 And soul and heart and body are all
 at ease :
 What marvel my Camilla told me all ?
 It was so happy an hour, so sweet a
 place,
 And I was as the brother of her blood,
 And by that name I moved upon her
 breath ;
 Dear name, which had too much of
 nearness in it
 And heralded the distance of this
 time !
 At first her voice was very sweet and
 low,
 As if she were afraid of utterance ;
 But in the onward current of her
 speech,
 (As echoes of the hollow-banked
 brooks
 Are fashion'd by the channel which
 they keep),
 Her words did of their meaning bor-
 row sound,
 Her cheek did catch the color of her
 words.

I heard and trembled, yet I could but
 hear ;
 My heart paused—my raised eyelids
 would not fall,
 But still I kept my eyes upon the sky.
 I seem'd the only part of Time stood
 still,
 And saw the motion of all other
 things ;
 While her words, syllable by syllable,
 Like water, drop by drop, upon my
 ear
 Fell ; and I wish'd, yet wish'd her not
 to speak ;
 But she spake on, for I did name no
 wish,
 What marvel my Camilla told me all
 Her maiden dignities of Hope and
 Love—
 'Perchance,' she said, 'return'd.'
 Even then the stars
 Did tremble in their stations as I
 gazed ;
 But she spake on, for I did name no
 wish,
 No wish—no hope. Hope was not
 wholly dead,
 But breathing hard at the approach of
 Death,—
 Camilla, my Camilla, who was mine
 No longer in the dearest sense of
 mine—
 For all the secret of her inmost heart,
 And all the maiden empire of her
 mind,
 Lay like a map before me, and I saw
 There, where I hoped myself to reign
 as king,
 There, where that day I crown'd my-
 self as king,
 There in my realm and even on my
 throne,
Another ! then it seem'd as tho' a link
 Of some tight chain within my inmost
 frame
 Was riven in twain : that life I heeded
 not
 Flow'd from me, and the darkness of
 the grave,
 The darkness of the grave and utter
 night,
 Did swallow up my vision ; at her
 feet,

Even the feet of her I loved, I fell,
Smit with exceeding sorrow unto
Death.

Then had the earth beneath me
yawning cloven
With such a sound as when an ice-
berg splits
From cope to base—had Heaven from
all her doors,
With all her golden thresholds clash-
ing, roll'd
Her heaviest thunder—I had lain as
dead,
Mute, blind and motionless as then I
lay;
Dead, for henceforth there was no
life for me!
Mute, for henceforth what use were
words to me!
Blind, for the day was as the night to
me!
The night to me was kinder than the
day;
The night in pity took away my day,
Because my grief as yet was newly
born
Of eyes too weak to look upon the
light;
And thro' the hasty notice of the ear
Frail Life was startled from the tender
love
Of him she brooded over. Would I
had lain
Until the plaited ivy-tress had wound
Round my worn limbs, and the wild
brier had driven
Its knotted thorns thro' my unpaining
brows,
Leaning its roses on my faded eyes.
The wind had blown above me, and
the rain
Had fall'n upon me, and the gilded
snake
Had nestled in this bosom-throne of
Love,
But I had been at rest for evermore.

Long time entrancement held me.
All too soon
Life (like a wanton too-officious friend,
Who will not *hear* denial, vain and
rude

With proffer of unwish'd-for services)
Entering all the avenues of sense
Past thro' into his citadel, the brain,
With hated warmth of apprehensive-
ness.

And first the chillness of the sprinkled
brook

Smote on my brows, and then I seem'd
to hear

Its murmur, as the drowning seaman
hears,

Who with his head below the surface
dropt

Listens the muffled booming indistinct
Of the confused floods, and dimly
knows

His head shall rise no more: and then
came in

The white light of the weary moon
above,

Diffused and molten into flaky cloud.
Was my sight drunk that it did shape

to me
Him who should own that name?

Were it not well
If so be that the echo of that name

Ringin within the fancy had updrawn
A fashion and a phantasm of the form
It should attach to? Phantom!—had
the ghastliest

That ever lusted for a body, sucking
The foul steam of the grave to thicken
by it,

There in the shuddering moonlight
brought its face

And what it has for eyes as close to
mine

As he did—better that than his, than
he

The friend, the neighbor, Lionel, the
beloved,

The loved, the lover, the happy
Lionel,

The low-voiced, tender-spirited Lionel,
All joy, to whom my agony was a joy.
O how her choice did leap forth from
his eyes!

O how her love did clothe itself in
smiles

About his lips! and—not one mo-
ment's grace—

Then when the effect weigh'd seas
upon my head

To come my way! to twit me with the
cause!

Was not the land as free thro' all
her ways
To him as me? Was not his wont to
walk
Between the going light and growing
night?
Had I not learnt my loss before he
came?
Could that be more because he came
my way?
Why should he not come my way if
he would?
And yet to-night, to-night—when all
my wealth
Flash'd from me in a moment and I
fell
Beggar'd for ever—why *should* he
come my way
Robed in those robes of light I must
not wear,
With that great crown of beams about
his brows—
Come like an angel to a damned soul,
To tell him of the bliss he had with
God—
Come like a careless and a greedy
heir
That scarce can wait the reading of
the will
Before he takes possession? Was
mine a mood
To be invaded rudely, and not rather
A sacred, secret, unapproached woe,
Unspeakable? I was shut up with
Grief;
She took the body of my past de-
light,
Narded and swathed and balm'd it for
herself,
And laid it in a sepulchre of rock
Never to rise again. I was led mute
Into her temple like a sacrifice;
I was the High Priest in her holiest
place,
Not to be loudly broken in upon.

Oh friend, thoughts deep and heavy
as these well-nigh
O'erbore the limits of my brain: but
he

Bent o'er me, and my neck his arm
upstay'd.
I thought it was an adder's fold, and
once
I strove to disengage myself, but
fail'd,
Being so feeble: she bent above me,
too;
Wan was her cheek; for whatsoe'er
of blight
Lives in the dewy touch of pity had
made
The red rose there a pale one—and
her eyes—
I saw the moonlight glitter on their
tears—
And some few drops of that distress-
ful rain
Fell on my face, and her long ringlets
moved,
Drooping and beaten by the breeze,
and brush'd
My fallen forehead in their to and
fro,
For in the sudden anguish of her
heart
Loosed from their simple thrall they
had flow'd abroad,
And floated on and parted round her
neck,
Mantling her form halfway. She,
when I woke,
Something she ask'd, I know not
what, and ask'd,
Unanswer'd, since I spake not; for
the sound
Of that dear voice so musically low,
And now first heard with any sense of
pain,
As it had taken life away before,
Choked all the syllables, that strove
to rise
From my full heart.

The blissful lover, too,
From his great hoard of happiness
distill'd
Some drops of solace; like a vain
rich man,
That, having always prosper'd in the
world,
Folding his hands, deals comfortable
words

To hearts wounded for ever; yet, in
 truth,
 Fair speech was his and delicate of
 phrase,
 Falling in whispers on the sense, address'd
 More to the inward than the outward
 ear,
 As rain of the midsummer midnight
 soft,
 Scarce-heard, recalling fragrance and
 the green
 Of the dead spring: but mine was
 wholly dead,
 No bud, no leaf, no flower, no fruit
 for me.
 Yet who had done, or who had
 suffer'd wrong?
 And why was I to darken their pure
 love,
 If, as I found, they two did love each
 other,
 Because my own was darken'd? Why
 was I
 To cross between their happy star
 and them?
 To stand a shadow by their shining
 doors,
 And vex them with my darkness?
 Did I love her?
 Ye know that I did love her; to this
 present
 My full-orb'd love has waned not.
 Did I love her,
 And could I look upon her tearful eyes?
 What had *she* done to weep? Why
 should *she* weep?
 O innocent of spirit—let my heart
 Break rather—whom the gentlest airs
 of Heaven
 Should kiss with an unwonted gentle-
 ness.
 Her love did murder mine? What
 then? She deem'd
 I wore a brother's mind: she call'd
 me brother:
 She told me all her love: she shall
 not weep.

The brightness of a burning
 thought, awhile
 In battle with the glooms of my dark
 will,

Moonlike emerged, and to itself lit
 up
 There on the depth of an unfathom'd
 woe
 Reflex of action. Starting up at once,
 As from a dismal dream of my own
 death,
 I, for I loved her, lost my love in
 Love;
 I, for I loved her, graspt the hand she
 lov'd,
 And laid it in her own, and sent my
 cry
 Thro' the blank night to Him who
 loving made
 The happy and the unhappy love, that
 He
 Would hold the hand of blessing over
 them,
 Lionel, the happy, and her, and her,
 his bride!
 Let them so love that men and boys
 may say,
 'Lo! how they love each other!' till
 their love
 Shall ripen to a proverb, unto all
 Known, when their faces are forgot in
 the land—
 One golden dream of love, from which
 may death
 Awake them with heaven's music in a
 life
 More living to some happier happi-
 ness,
 Swallowing its precedent in victory.
 And as for me, Camilla, as for me,—
 The dew of tears is an unwholesome
 dew,
 They will but sicken the sick plant
 the more.
 Deem that I love thee but as brothers
 do,
 So shalt thou love me still as sisters
 do;
 Or if thou dream aught farther, dream
 but how
 I could have loved thee, had there
 been none else
 To love as lovers, loved again by
 thee.

Or this, or somewhat like to this, I
 spake,

When I beheld her weep so ruefully;
 For sure my love should ne'er indue
 the front
 And mask of Hate, who lives on
 others' moans.
 Shall Love pledge Hatred in her bitter
 draughts,
 And batten on her poisons? Love
 forbid!
 Love passeth not the threshold of
 cold Hate,
 And Hate is strange beneath the roof
 of Love.
 O Love, if thou be'st Love, dry up
 these tears
 Shed for the love of Love; for tho'
 mine image,
 The subject of thy power, be cold in
 her,
 Yet, like cold snow, it melteth in the
 source
 Of these sad tears, and feeds their
 downward flow.
 So Love, arraign'd to judgment and to
 death,
 Received unto himself a part of blame,
 Being guiltless, as an innocent pris-
 oner,
 Who, when the woful sentence hath
 been past,
 And all the clearness of his fame hath
 gone
 Beneath the shadow of the curse of
 man,
 First falls asleep in swoon, wherefrom
 awaked,
 And looking round upon his tearful
 friends,
 Forthwith and in his agony con-
 ceives
 A shameful sense as of a cleaving
 crime—
 For whence without some guilt should
 such grief be?

So died that hour, and fell into the
 abysm
 Of forms outworn, but not to me out-
 worn,
 Who never hail'd another—was there
 one?
 There might be one—one other, worth
 the life

That made it sensible. So that hour
 died
 Like odor rapt into the winged wind
 Borne into alien lands and far away.

There be some hearts so airily
 built, that they,
 They—when their love is wreck'd—if
 Love can wreck—
 On that sharp ridge of utmost doom
 ride highly
 Above the perilous seas of Change
 and Chance;
 Nay, more, hold out the lights of
 cheerfulness;
 As the tall ship, that many a dreary
 year
 Knit to some dismal sandbank far at
 sea,
 All thro' the livelong hours of utter
 dark,
 Showers slanting light upon the dolo-
 rous wave.
 For me—what light, what gleam on
 those black ways
 Where Love could walk with ban-
 ish'd Hope no more?

It was ill-done to part you, Sisters
 fair;
 Love's arms were wreath'd about the
 neck of Hope,
 And Hope kiss'd Love, and Love
 drew in her breath
 In that close kiss, and drank her
 whisper'd tales.
 They said that Love would die when
 Hope was gone,
 And Love mourn'd long, and sor-
 row'd after Hope;
 At last she sought out Memory, and
 they trod
 The same old paths where Love had
 walk'd with Hope,
 And Memory fed the soul of Love
 with tears.

II.

FROM that time forth I would not see
 her more;
 But many weary moons I lived
 alone—

Alone, and in the heart of the great forest.
 Sometimes upon the hills beside the sea
 All day I watch'd the floating isles of shade,
 And sometimes on the shore, upon the sands
 Insensibly I drew her name, until
 The meaning of the letters shot into
 My brain; anon the wanton billow wash'd
 Them over, till they faded like my love.
 The hollow caverns heard me—the black brooks
 Of the midforest heard me—the soft winds,
 Laden with thistledown and seeds of flowers,
 Paused in their course to hear me, for my voice
 Was all of thee: the merry linnet knew me,
 The squirrel knew me, and the dragonfly
 Shot by me like a flash of purple fire.
 The rough brier tore my bleeding palms; the hemlock,
 Brow-high, did strike my forehead as I past;
 Yet trod I not the wildflower in my path,
 Nor bruised the wildbird's egg.

Was this the end?

Why grew we then together in one plot?
 Why fed we from one fountain? drew one sun?
 Why were our mother's branches of one stem?
 Why were we one in all things, save in that
 Where to have been one had been the cope and crown
 Of all I hoped and fear'd?—if that same nearness
 Were father to this distance, and that
one
 Vauntcourier to this *double*? if Affec-
 tion

Living slew Love, and Sympathy
 hew'd out
 The bosom-sepulchre of Sympathy?

Chiefly I sought the cavern and the hill
 Where last we roam'd together, for the sound
 Of the loud stream was pleasant, and the wind
 Came wooingly with woodbine smells. Sometimes
 All day I sat within the cavern-mouth,
 Fixing my eyes on those three cy-press-cones
 That spired above the wood; and with mad hand
 Tearing the bright leaves of the ivy-screen,
 I cast them in the noisy brook beneath,
 And watch'd them till they vanish'd from my sight
 Beneath the bower of wreathed eg-lantines:
 And all the fragments of the living rock
 (Huge blocks, which some old trem-
 bling of the world
 Had loosen'd from the mountain, till they fell
 Half-digging their own graves) these in my agony
 Did I make bare of all the golden moss,
 Wherewith the dashing runnel in the spring
 Had liveried them all over. In my brain
 The spirit seem'd to flag from thought to thought,
 As moonlight wandering thro' a mist: my blood
 Crept like marsh drains thro' all my languid limbs;
 The motions of my heart seem'd far within me,
 Unfrequent, low, as tho' it told its pulses;
 And yet it shook me, that my frame would shudder,
 As if 'twere drawn asunder by the rack.



"IT SEES ITSELF FROM THATCH TO BASE."—*Page 107.*

But over the deep graves of Hope
 and Fear,
 And all the broken palaces of the
 Past,
 Brooded one master-passion ever-
 more,
 Like to a low-hung and a fiery sky
 Above some fair metropolis, earth-
 shock'd,—
 Hung round with ragged rims and
 burning folds,—
 Embathing all with wild and woful
 hues,
 Great hills of ruins, and collapsed
 masses
 Of thundershaken columns indistinct,
 And fused together in the tyrannous
 light—
 Ruins, the ruins of all my life and me!

Sometimes I thought Camilla was
 no more,
 Some one had told me she was dead,
 and ask'd
 If I would see her burial: then I
 seem'd
 To rise, and through the forest-shadow
 borne
 With more than mortal swiftness, I
 ran down
 The steepy sea-bank, till I came upon
 The rear of a procession, curving
 round
 The silver-sheeted bay: in front of
 which
 Six stately virgins, all in white, up-
 bare
 A broad earth-sweeping pall of whit-
 est lawn,
 Wreathed round the bier with gar-
 lands: in the distance,
 From out the yellow woods upon the
 hill
 Look'd forth the summit and the pin-
 nacles
 Of a gray steeple—thence at inter-
 vals
 A low bell tolling. All the pageant-
 ry,
 Save those six virgins which upheld
 the bier,
 Were stoled from head to foot in
 flowing black;

One walk'd abreast with me, and veil'd
 his brow,
 And he was loud in weeping and in
 praise
 Of her, we follow'd: a strong sympa-
 thy
 Shook all my soul: I flung myself
 upon him
 In tears and cries: I told him all my
 love,
 How I had loved her from the first;
 whereat
 He shrank and howl'd, and from his
 brow drew back
 His hand to push me from him; and
 the face,
 The very face and form of Lionel
 Flash'd thro' my eyes into my inner-
 most brain,
 And at his feet I seem'd to faint and
 fall,
 To fall and die away. I could not
 rise
 Albeit I strove to follow. They past
 on,
 The lordly Phantasms! in their float-
 ing folds
 They past and were no more: but I
 had fallen
 Prone by the dashing runnel on the
 grass.

Always the inaudible invisible
 thought,
 Artificer and subject, lord and slave,
 Shaped by the audible and visible,
 Moulded the audible and visible;
 All crisped sounds of wave and leaf
 and wind,
 Flatter'd the fancy of my fading
 brain;
 The cloud-pavilion'd element, the
 wood,
 The mountain, the three cypresses,
 the cave,
 Storm, sunset, glows and glories of
 the moon
 Below black firs, when silent creep-
 ing winds
 Laid the long night in silver streaks
 and bars,
 Were wrought into the tissue of my
 dream:

The moanings in the forest, the loud
 brook,
 Cries of the partridge like a rusty key
 Turn'd in a lock, owl-whoop and dor-
 hawk-whirr
 Awoke me not, but were a part of
 sleep,
 And voices in the distance calling to
 me
 And in my vision bidding me dream
 on,
 Like sounds without the twilight
 realm of dreams,
 Which wander round the bases of the
 hills,
 And murmur at the low-dropt eaves
 of sleep,
 Half-entering the portals. Often-
 times
 The vision had fair prelude, in the
 end
 Opening on darkness, stately vesti-
 bules
 To caves and shows of Death:
 whether the mind,
 With some revenge—even to itself
 unknown,—
 Made strange division of its suffer-
 ing
 With her, whom to have suffering
 view'd had been
 Extremest pain; or that the clear-
 eyed Spirit,
 Being blunted in the Present, grew at
 length
 Prophetical and prescient of whate'er
 The Future had in store: or that
 which most
 Enchains belief, the sorrow of my
 spirit
 Was of so wide a compass it took in
 All I had loved, and my dull agony,
 Ideally to her transferr'd, became
 Anguish intolerable.

The day waned;

Alone I sat with her: about my brow
 Her warm breath floated in the utter-
 ance
 Of silver-corded tones: her lips were
 sunder'd
 With smiles of tranquil bliss, which
 broke in light

Like morning from her eyes—her
 eloquent eyes,
 (As I have seen them many a hun-
 dred times)
 Fill'd all with pure clear fire, thro'
 mine down rain'd
 Their spirit-searching splendors. As
 a vision
 Unto a haggard prisoner, iron-stay'd
 In damp and dismal dungeons under-
 ground,
 Confined on points of faith, when
 strength is shock'd
 With torment, and expectancy of
 worse
 Upon the morrow, thro' the ragged
 walls,
 All unawares before his half-shut
 eyes,
 Comes in upon him in the dead of
 night,
 And with the excess of sweetness and
 of awe,
 Makes the heart tremble, and the
 sight run over
 Upon his steely gyves; so those fair
 eyes
 Shone on my darkness, forms which
 ever stood
 Within the magic cirque of memory,
 Invisible but deathless, waiting still
 The edict of the will to reassume
 The semblance of those rare realities
 Of which they were the mirrors. Now
 the light
 Which was their life, burst through
 the cloud of thought
 Keen, irrepressible.

It was a room

Within the summer-house of which I
 spake,
 Hung round with paintings of the sea,
 and one
 A vessel in mid-ocean, her heaved
 prow
 Clambering, the mast bent and the
 ravin wind
 In her sail roaring. From the outer
 day,
 Betwixt the close-set ivies came a
 broad
 And solid beam of isolated light,

Crowded with driving atomies, and
 fell
 Slanting upon that picture, from
 prime youth
 Well-known well-loved. She drew it
 long ago
 Forthgazing on the waste and open
 sea,
 One morning when the upblown bil-
 low ran
 Shoreward beneath red clouds, and I
 had pour'd
 Into the shadowing pencil's naked
 forms
 Color and life: it was a bond and
 seal
 Of friendship, spoken of with tearful
 smiles;
 A monument of childhood and of
 love;
 The poesy of childhood; my lost
 love
 Symbol'd in storm. We gazed on it
 together
 In mute and glad remembrance, and
 each heart
 Grew closer to the other, and the eye
 Was riveted and charm-bound, gaz-
 ing like
 The Indian on a still-eyed snake, low-
 couch'd—
 A beauty which is death; when all at
 once
 That painted vessel, as with inner
 life,
 Began to heave upon that painted
 sea;
 An earthquake, my loud heart-beats,
 made the ground
 Reel under us, and all at once, soul,
 life
 And breath and motion, past and
 flow'd away
 To those unreal billows: round and
 round
 A whirlwind caught and bore us;
 mighty gyres
 Rapid and vast, of hissing spray
 wind-driven
 Far thro' the dizzy dark. Aloud she
 shriek'd;
 My heart was cloven with pain; I
 wound my arms

About her: we whirl'd giddily; the
 wind
 Sung; but I clasp'd her without fear:
 her weight
 Shrank in my grasp, and over my dim
 eyes,
 And parted lips which drank her
 breath, down-hung
 The jaws of Death: I, groaning, from
 me flung
 Her empty phantom: all the sway
 and whirl
 Of the storm dropt to windless calm,
 and I
 Down welter'd thro' the dark ever and
 ever.

III.

I CAME one day and sat among the
 stones
 Strewn in the entry of the moaning
 cave;
 A morning air, sweet after rain, ran
 over
 The rippling levels of the lake, and
 blew
 Coolness and moisture and all smells
 of bud
 And foliage from the dark and drip-
 ping woods
 Upon my fever'd brows that shook
 and throbb'd
 From temple unto temple. To what
 height
 The day had grown I know not.
 Then came on me
 The hollow tolling of the bell, and
 all
 The vision of the bier. As hereto-
 fore
 I walk'd behind with one who veil'd
 his brow.
 Methought by slow degrees the sullen
 bell
 Toll'd quicker, and the breakers on
 the shore
 Sloped into louder surf: those that
 went with me,
 And those that held the bier before
 my face,
 Moved with one spirit round about the
 bay,

Trod swifter steps; and while I
 walk'd with these
 In marvel at that gradual change, I
 thought
 Four bells instead of one began to
 ring,
 Four merry bells, four merry marriage
 bells,
 In clanging cadence jangling peal on
 peal—
 A long loud clash of rapid marriage-
 bells.
 Then those who led the van, and
 those in rear,
 Rush'd into dance, and like wild Bac-
 chanals
 Fled onward to the steeple in the
 woods:
 I, too, was borne along and felt the
 blast
 Beat on my heated eyelids: all at
 once
 The front rank made a sudden halt;
 the bells
 Lapsed into frightful stillness; the
 surge fell
 From thunder into whispers; those
 six maids
 With shrieks and ringing laughter on
 the sand
 Threw down the bier; the woods
 upon the hill
 Waved with a sudden gust that sweep-
 ing down
 Took the edges of the pall, and blew
 it far
 Until it hung, a little silver cloud
 Over the sounding seas: I turn'd:
 my heart
 Shrank in me, like a snowflake in the
 hand,
 Waiting to see the settled countenance
 Of her I loved, adorn'd with fading
 flowers.
 But she from out her death-like chrys-
 alis,
 She from her bier, as into fresher life,
 My sister, and my cousin, and my
 love,
 Leapt lightly clad in bridal white—her
 hair
 Studded with one rich Provence rose
 —a light

Of smiling welcome round her lips—
 her eyes
 And cheeks as bright as when she
 climb'd the hill.
 One hand she reach'd to those that
 came behind,
 And while I mused nor yet endured
 to take
 So rich a prize, the man who stood
 with me
 Stept gaily forward, throwing down
 his robes,
 And claspt her hand in his: again the
 bells
 Jangled and clang'd: again the stormy
 surf
 Crash'd in the shingle: and the whirl-
 ing rout
 Led by those two rush'd into dance,
 and fled
 Wind-footed to the steeple in the
 woods,
 Till they were swallow'd in the leafy
 bowers,
 And I stood sole beside the vacant
 bier.
 There, there, my latest vision—then
 the event!

IV.

THE GOLDEN SUPPER.¹*(Another speaks.)*

HE flies the event: he leaves the
 event to me:
 Poor Julian—how he rush'd away;
 the bells,
 Those marriage-bells, echoing in ear
 and heart—
 But cast a parting glance at me, you
 saw,
 As who should say 'Continue.' Well
 he had
 One golden hour—of triumph shall I
 say?
 Solace at least—before he left his
 home.

¹ This poem is founded upon a story in Boccaccio. See Introduction, p. 355.

Would you had seen him in that
hour of his!
He moved thro' all of it majestically—
Restrain'd himself quite to the close—
but now—

Whether they *were* his lady's marriage-bells,
Or prophets of them in his fantasy,
I never ask'd: but Lionel and the girl
Were wedded, and our Julian came again
Back to his mother's house among the pines.
But these, their gloom, the mountains
and the Bay,
The whole land weigh'd him down as
Ætna does
The Giant of Mythology: he would
go,
Would leave the land for ever, and
had gone
Surely, but for a whisper, 'Go not
yet,'
Some warning—sent divinely—as it
seem'd
By that which follow'd—but of this I
deem
As of the visions that he told—the
event
Glanced back upon them in his
after life,
And partly made them—tho' he knew
it not.

And thus he stay'd and would not
look at her—
No not for months: but, when the
eleventh moon
After their marriage lit the lover's
Bay,
Heard yet once more the tolling bell,
and said,
Would you could toll me out of life,
but found—
All softly as his mother broke it to
him—
A crueller reason than a crazy ear,
For that low knell tolling his lady
dead—
Dead—and had lain three days with-
out a pulse:

All that look'd on her had pronounced
her dead.
And so they bore her (for in Julian's
land
They never nail a dumb head up in
elm),
Bore her free-faced to the free airs of
heaven,
And laid her in the vault of her own
kin.

What did he then? not die: he is
here and hale—
Not plunge headforemost from the
mountain there,
And leave the name of Lover's Leap:
not he:
He knew the meaning of the whisper
now,
Thought that he knew it. 'This, I
stay'd for this;
O love, I have not seen you for so
long.
Now, now, will I go down into the
grave,
I will be all alone with all I love,
And kiss her on the lips. She is his
no more:
The dead returns to me, and I go
down
To kiss the dead.'

The fancy stirr'd him so
He rose and went, and entering the
dim vault,
And, making there a sudden light, be-
held
All round about him that which all
will be.
The light was but a flash, and went
again.
Then at the far end of the vault he
saw
His lady with the moonlight on her
face;
Her breast as in a shadow-prison,
bars
Of black and bands of silver, which
the moon
Struck from an open grating over-
head
High in the wall, and all the rest of
her

Drown'd in the gloom and horror of
the vault.

'It was my wish,' he said, 'to pass,
to sleep,
To rest, to be with her—till the great
day
Peal'd on us with that music which
rights all,
And raised us hand in hand.' And,
kneeling there
Down in the dreadful dust that once
was man,
Dust, as he said, that once was loving
hearts,
Hearts that had beat with such a love
as mine—
Not such as mine, no, nor for such as
her—
He softly put his arm about her
neck
And kiss'd her more than once, till
helpless death
And silence made him bold—nay, but
I wrong him,
He revered his dear lady even in
death;
But, placing his true hand upon her
heart,
'O, you warm heart,' he moan'd, 'not
even death
Can chill you all at once:' then start-
ing, thought
His dreams had come again. 'Do I
wake or sleep?
Or am I made immortal, or my love
Mortal once more?' It beat—the
heart—it beat:
Faint—but it beat: at which his own
began
To pulse with such a vehemence that it
drown'd
The feebler motion underneath his
hand.
But when at last his doubts were
satisfied,
He raised her softly from the sepul-
chre,
And, wrapping her all over with the
cloak
He came in, and now striding fast,
and now
Sitting awhile to rest, but evermore

Holding his golden burthen in his
arms,
So bore her thro' the solitary land
Back to the mother's house where
she was born.

There the good mother's kindly
ministering,
With half a night's appliances, re-
call'd
Her fluttering life: she rais'd an eye
that ask'd
'Where?' till the things familiar to
her youth
Had made a silent answer: then she
spoke
'Here! and how came I here?' and
learning it
(They told her somewhat rashly as I
think)
At once began to wander and to
wail,
'Ay, but you know that you must give
me back:
Send! bid him come;' but Lionel was
away—
Stung by his loss had vanish'd, none
knew where.
'He casts me out,' she wept, and,
goes'—a wail
That seeming something, yet saw
nothing, born
Not from believing mind, but shat-
ter'd nerve,
Yet haunting Julian, as her own re-
proof
At some precipitance in her burial.
Then, when her own true spirit had
return'd,
'Oh yes, and you,' she said, 'and none
but you?
For you have given me life and love
again,
And none but you yourself shall tell
him of it,
And you shall give me back when he
returns.'
'Stay then a little,' answer'd Julian,
'here,
And keep yourself, none knowing, to
yourself;
And I will do your will. I may not
stay,

No, not an hour ; but send me notice
of him
When he returns, and then will I re-
turn,
And I will make a solemn offering of
you
To him you love.' And faintly she
replied,
'And I will do *your* will, and none
shall know.'

Not know? with such a secret to be
known.
But all their house was old and loved
them both,
And all the house had known the
loves of both ;
Had died almost to serve them any
way,
And all the land was waste and soli-
tary :
And then he rode away ; but after
this,
An hour or two, Camilla's travail
came
Upon her, and that day a boy was
born,
Heir of his face and land, to Lionel.

And thus our lonely lover rode
away,
And pausing at a hostel in a marsh,
There fever seized upon him : myself
was then
Travelling that land, and meant to
rest an hour ;
And sitting down to such a base re-
past,
It makes me angry yet to speak of
it—
I heard a groaning overhead, and
climb'd
The moulder'd stairs (for everything
was vile)
And in a loft, with none to wait on
him,
Found, as it seem'd, a skeleton alone,
Raving of dead men's dust and beat-
ing hearts.

A dismal hostel in a dismal land,
A flat malarian world of reed and
rush!

But there from fever and my care of
him
Sprang up a friendship that may help
us yet.
For while we roam'd along the dreary
coast,
And waited for her message, piece by
piece
I learnt the drearier story of his
life ;
And, tho' he loved and honor'd Li-
onel,
Found that the sudden wail his lady
made
Dwelt in his fancy : did he know her
worth,
Her beauty even? should he not be
taught,
Ev'n by the price that others set upon
it,
The value of that jewel he had to
guard?

Suddenly came her notice and we
past,
I with our lover to his native Bay.

This love is of the brain, the mind,
the soul :
That makes the sequel pure ; tho'
some of us
Beginning at the sequel know no
more.
Not such am I : and yet I say the
bird
That will not hear my call, however
sweet,
But if my neighbor whistle answers
him—
What matter? there are others in the
wood.
Yet when I saw her (and I thought
him crazed,
Tho' not with such a craziness as
needs
A cell and keeper), those dark eyes
of hers—
Oh! such dark eyes! and not her
eyes alone,
But all from these to where she
touch'd on earth,
For such a craziness as Julian's look'd
No less than one divine apology.

So sweetly and so modestly she
 came
 To greet us, her young hero in her
 arms!
 'Kiss him,' she said. 'You gave me
 life again.
 He, but for you, had never seen it
 once.
 His other father you! Kiss him, and
 then
 Forgive him, if his name be Julian
 too.'

Talk of lost hopes and broken
 heart! his own
 Sent such a flame into his face, I
 knew
 Some sudden vivid pleasure hit him
 there.

But he was all the more resolved to
 go,
 And sent at once to Lionel, praying
 him
 By that great love they both had
 borne the dead,
 To come and revel for one hour with
 him
 Before he left the land for evermore;
 And then to friends—they were not
 many—who lived
 Scattering about that lonely land of
 his,
 And bad them to a banquet of fare-
 wells.

And Julian made a solemn feast: I
 never
 Sat at a costlier; for all round his
 hall
 From column on to column, as in a
 wood,
 Not such as here—an equatorial one,
 Great garlands swung and blossom'd;
 and beneath,
 Heirlooms, and ancient miracles of
 Art,
 Chalice and salver, wines that,
 Heaven knows when,
 Had suck'd the fire of some forgot-
 ten sun,
 And kept it thro' a hundred years of
 gloom,

Yet glowing in a heart of ruby—cups
 Where nymph and God ran ever
 round in gold—
 Others of glass as costly—some with
 gems
 Moveable and resettable at will,
 And trebling all the rest in value—Ah
 heavens!
 Why need I tell you all?—suffice to
 say
 That whatsoever such a house as his,
 And his was old, has in it rare or fair
 Was brought before the guest: and
 they, the guests,
 Wonder'd at some strange light in
 Julian's eyes
 (I told you that he had his golden
 hour),
 And such a feast, ill-suited as it
 seem'd
 To such a time, to Lionel's loss and
 his
 And that resolved self-exile from a
 land
 He never would revisit, such a feast
 So rich, so strange, and stranger ev'n
 than rich,
 But rich as for the nuptials of a king.

And stranger yet, at one end of the
 hall
 Two great funereal curtains, looping
 down,
 Parted a little ere they met the floor,
 About a picture of his lady, taken
 Some years before, and falling hid the
 frame.
 And just above the parting was a
 lamp:
 So the sweet figure folded round with
 night
 Seem'd stepping out of darkness with
 a smile.

Well then—our solemn feast—we
 ate and drank,
 And might—the wines being of such
 nobleness—
 Have jested also, but for Julian's eyes,
 And something weird and wild about
 it all:
 What was it? for our lover seldom
 spoke,

Scarce touch'd the meats ; but ever
and anon
A priceless goblet with a priceless
wine
Arising, show'd he drank beyond his
use ;
And when the feast was near an end,
he said :

'There is a custom in the Orient,
friends—
I read of it in Persia—when a man
Will honor those who feast with him,
he brings
And shows them whatsoever he ac-
counts
Of all his treasures the most beautiful,
Gold, jewels, arms, whatever it may be.
This custom——'

Pausing here a moment, all
The guests broke in upon him with
meeting hands
And cries about the banquet—' Beau-
tiful !
Who could desire more beauty at a
feast ? '

The lover answer'd, ' There is more
than one
Here sitting who desires it. Laud
me not
Before my time, but hear me to the
close.
This custom steps yet further when
the guest
Is loved and honor'd to the utter-
most.
For after he hath shown him gems or
gold,
He brings and sets before him in rich
guise
That which is thrice as beautiful as
these,
The beauty that is dearest to his
heart—
" O my heart's lord, would I could
show you," he says,
" Ev'n my heart too." And I pro-
pose to-night
To show you what is dearest to my
heart,
And my heart too.

'But solve me first a doubt.
I knew a man, nor many years ago ;
He had a faithful servant, one who
loved
His master more than all on earth
beside.
He falling sick, and seeming close on
death,
His master would not wait until he
died,
But bad his menials bear him from
the door,
And leave him in the public way to
die.
I knew another, not so long ago,
Who found the dying servant, took
him home,
And fed, and cherish'd him, and
saved his life.
I ask you now, should this first master
claim
His service, whom does it belong to ?
him
Who thrust him out, or him who
saved his life ? '

This question, so flung down before
the guests,
And balanced either way by each, at
length
When some were doubtful how the
law would hold,
Was handed over by consent of all
To one who had not spoken, Lionel.

Fair speech was his, and delicate of
phrase.
And he beginning languidly—his loss
Weigh'd on him yet—but warming as
he went,
Glanced at the point of law, to pass
it by,
Affirming that as long as either lived,
By all the laws of love and grateful-
ness,
The service of the one so saved was
due
All to the saver—adding, with a
smile,
The first for many weeks—a semi-
smile
As at a strong conclusion—' body and
soul

And life and limbs, all his to work his will.'

Then Julian made a secret sign to me
To bring Camilla down before them all.
And crossing her own picture as she came,
And looking as much lovelier as herself
Is lovelier than all others—on her head
A diamond circlet, and from under this
A veil, that seemed no more than gilded air,
Flying by each fine ear, an Eastern gauze
With seeds of gold—so, with that grace of hers,
Slow-moving as a wave against the wind,
That flings a mist behind it in the sun—
And bearing high in arms the mighty babe,
The younger Julian, who himself was crown'd
With roses, none so rosy as himself—
And over all her babe and her the jewels
Of many generations of his house
Sparkled and flash'd, for he had decked them out
As for a solemn sacrifice of love—
So she came in:—I am long in telling it,
I never yet beheld a thing so strange,
Sad, sweet, and strange together—floated in—
While all the guests in mute amazement rose—
And slowly pacing to the middle hall,
Before the board, there paused and stood, her breast
Hard-heaving, and her eyes upon her feet,
Not daring yet to glance at Lionel.
But him she carried, him nor lights nor feasts
Dazed or amazed, nor eyes of men; who cared

Only to use his own, and staring wide
And hungering for the gilt and jewell'd world
About him, look'd, as he is like to prove,
When Julian goes, the lord of all he saw.

'My guests,' said Julian. 'you are honor'd now
Ev'n to the uttermost: in her behold
Of all my treasures the most beautiful,
Of all things upon earth the dearest to me.'
Then waving us a sign to seat ourselves,
Led his dear lady to a chair of state.
And I, by Lionel sitting, saw his face
Fire, and dead ashes and all fire again
Thrice in a second, felt him tremble too,
And heard him muttering, 'So like, so like;
She never had a sister. I knew none.
Some cousin of his and hers—O God, so like!'
And then he suddenly ask'd her if she were.
She shook, and cast her eyes down, and was dumb.
And then some other question'd if she came
From foreign lands, and still she did not speak.
Another, if the boy were hers: but she
To all their queries answer'd not a word,
Which made the amazement more, till one of them
Said, shuddering, 'Her spectre!' But his friend
Replied, in half a whisper, 'Not at least
The spectre that will speak if spoken to.
Terrible pity, if one so beautiful
Prove, as I almost dread to find her, dumb!'

But Julian, sitting by her, answer'd
all:
'She is but dumb, because in her you
see
That faithful servant whom we spoke
about,
Obedient to her second master now;
Which will not last. I have here
to-night a guest
So bound to me by common love and
loss—
What! shall I bind him more? in his
behalf,
Shall I exceed the Persian, giving him
That which of all things is the dear-
est to me,
Not only showing? and he himself
pronounced
That my rich gift is wholly mine to
give.

'Now all be dumb, and promise all
of you
Not to break in on what I say by word
Or whisper, while I show you all
my heart.'
And then began the story of his love
As here to-day, but not so wordily—
The passionate moment would not
suffer that—
Past thro' his visions to the burial;
thence
Down to this last strange hour in his
own hall;
And then rose up, and with him all
his guests
Once more as by enchantment; all but
he,
Lionel, who fain had risen, but fell
again,
And sat as if in chains—to whom he
said:

'Take my free gift, my cousin, for
your wife;
And were it only for the giver's sake,
And tho' she seem so like the one you
lost,
Yet cast her not away so suddenly,
Lest there be none left here to bring
her back:
I leave this land forever.' Here he
ceased.

Then taking his dear lady by one
hand,
And bearing on one arm the noble
babe,
He slowly brought them both to Lion-
nel.
And there the widower husband and
dead wife
Rush'd each at each with a cry, that
rather seem'd
For some new death than for a life re-
new'd;
Whereat the very babe began to wail;
At once they turn'd, and caught and
brought him in
To their charm'd circle, and, half kill-
ing him
With kisses, round him closed and
claspt again.
But Lionel, when at last he freed him-
self
From wife and child, and lifted up a
face
All over glowing with the sun of life,
And love, and boundless thanks—the
sight of this
So frightened our good friend, that
turning to me
And saying, 'It is over • let us go!—
There were our horses ready at the
doors—
We bad them no farewell, but mount-
ing these
He past for ever from his native land;
And I with him, my Julian, back to
mine.

TO ALFRED TENNYSON

MY GRANDSON.

GOLDEN-HAIR'D Ally whose name is one
with mine,
Crazy with laughter and babble and
earth's new wine,
Now that the flower of a year and a half is
thine,
O little blossom, O mine, and mine of mine,
Glorious poet who never hast written a
line,
Laugh, for the name at the head of my
verse is thine.
May'st thou never be wrong'd by the name
that is mine!

PREFATORY SONNET

TO THE 'NINETEENTH CENTURY.'

THOSE that of late had fled to far and
 fast
 To touch all shores, now leaving to
 the skill
 Of others their old craft seaworthy
 still,
 Have charter'd this; where, mindful
 of the past,
 Our true co-mates regather round the
 mast;
 Of diverse tongue, but with a common
 will
 Here, in this roaring moon of daffo-
 dil
 And crocus, to put forth and brave
 the blast;
 For some, descending from the sacred
 peak
 Of hoar high-templed Faith, have
 leagued again
 Their lot with ours to rove the world
 about;
 And some are wilder comrades, sworn
 to seek
 If any golden harbor be for men
 In seas of Death and sunless gulfs of
 Doubt.

TO THE REV. W. H. BROOK-
FIELD.

BROOKS, for they call'd you so that
 knew you best,
 Old Brooks, who loved so well to
 mouth my rhymes,
 How oft we two have heard St. Mary's
 chimes!
 How oft the Cantab supper, host and
 guest,
 Would echo helpless laughter to your
 jest!
 How oft with him we paced that walk
 of limes,
 Him, the lost light of those dawn-
 golden times,
 Who loved you well! Now both are
 gone to rest.

You man of humorous-melancholy
 mark,
 Dead of some inward agony—is it so?
 Our kindlier, trustier Jaques, past
 away!
 I cannot laud this life, it looks so
 dark:
 Σκιᾶς ὄναρ—dream of a shadow, go—
 God bless you. I shall join you in a
 day.

MONTENEGRO.

THEY rose to where their sovran
 eagle sails,
 They kept their faith, their freedom,
 on the height,
 Chaste, frugal, savage, arm'd by day
 and night
 Against the Turk; whose inroad no-
 where scales
 Their headlong passes, but his foot-
 step fails,
 And red with blood the Crescent reels
 from fight
 Before their dauntless hundreds, in
 prone flight
 By thousands down the crags and thro'
 the vales.
 O smallest among peoples! rough
 rock-throne
 Of Freedom! warriors beating back
 the swarm
 Of Turkish Islam for five hundred
 years,
 Great Tsernogora! never since thine
 own
 Black ridges drew the cloud and brake
 the storm
 Has breathed a race of mightier
 mountaineers.

TO VICTOR HUGO.

VICTOR in Drama, Victor in Romance,
 Cloud-weaver of phantasmal hopes
 and fears,
 French of the French, and Lord of
 human tears;
 Child-lover; Bard whose fame-lit lau-
 rels glance

Darkening the wreaths of all that
would advance,
Beyond our strait, their claim to be
thy peers;
Weird Titan by thy winter weight of
years
As yet unbroken, Stormy voice of
France!
Who dost not love our England—so
they say;

I know not—England, France, all
man to be
Will make one people ere man's race
be run:
And I, desiring that diviner day,
Yield thee full thanks for thy full
courtesy
To younger England in the boy my
son.

TRANSLATIONS, ETC.

BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH.

CONSTANTINUS, King of the Scots, after having sworn allegiance to Athelstan, allied himself with the Danes of Ireland under Anlaf, and invading England, was defeated by Athelstan and his brother Edmund with great slaughter at Brunanburh in the year 937.

I.

¹ ATHELSTAN King,
Lord among Earls,
Bracelet-bestower and
Baron of Barons,
He with his brother,
Edmund Atheling,
Gaining a lifelong
Glory in battle,
Slew with the sword-edge
There by Brunanburh,
Brake the shield-wall,
Hew'd the lindenwood,²
Hack'd the battleshield,
Sons of Edward with hammer'd
brands.

II.

Theirs was a greatness
Got from their Grandsires—
Theirs that so often in

¹ I have more or less availed myself of my son's prose translation of this poem in the *Contemporary Review* (November 1876).

² Shields of lindenwood.

Strife with their enemies
Struck for their hoards and their
hearths and their homes.

III.

Bow'd the spoiler,
Bent the Scotsman,
Fell the shipcrews
Doom'd to the death.
All the field with blood of the fighters
Flow'd, from when first the
great
Sun-star of morningtide,
Lamp of the Lord God
Lord everlasting,
Glode over earth till the glorious
creature
Sank to his setting.

IV.

There lay many a man
Marr'd by the javelin,
Men of the Northland
Shot over shield.
There was the Scotsman
Weary of war.

V.

We the West-Saxons,
Long as the daylight
Lasted, in companies
Troubled the track of the host that
we hated,
Grimly with swords that were sharp
from the grindstone,
Fiercely we hack'd at the flyers before
us.

VI.

Mighty the Mercian,
 Hard was his hand-play,
 Sparing not any of
 Those that with Anlaf,
 Warriors over the
 Weltering waters
 Borne in the bark's-bosom,
 Drew to this island :
 Doom'd to the death.

VII.

Five young kings put asleep by the
 sword-stroke,
 Seven strong Earls of the army of
 Anlaf
 Fell on the war-field, numberless
 numbers,
 Shipmen and Scotsmen.

VIII.

Then the Norse leader,
 Dire was his need of it,
 Few were his following,
 Fled to his warship :
 Fleeted his vessel to sea with the
 king in it,
 Saving his life on the fallow flood.

IX.

Also the crafty one,
 Constantinus,
 Crept to his North again,
 Hoar-headed hero !

X.

Slender warrant had
He to be proud of
 The welcome of war-knives—
 He that was reft of his
 Folk and his friends that had
 Fallen in conflict,
 Leaving his son too
 Lost in the carnage,
 Mangled to morsels,
 A youngster in war !

XI.

Slender reason had
He to be glad of

The clash of the war-glaive—
 Traitor and trickster
 And spurner of treaties—
 He nor had Anlaf
 With armies so broken
 A reason for bragging
 That they had the better
 In perils of battle
 On places of slaughter—
 The struggle of standards,
 The rush of the javelins,
 The crash of the charges,¹
 The wielding of weapons—
 The play that they play'd with
 The children of Edward.

XII.

Then with their nail'd prows
 Parted the Norsemen, a
 Blood-redden'd relic of
 Javelins over
 The jarring breaker, the
 deep-sea billow,
 Shaping their way toward
 Dyflen² again,
 Shamed in their souls.

XIII.

Also the brethren,
 King and Atheling,
 Each in his glory,
 Went to his own in his own West-
 Saxon-land,
 Glad of the war.

XIV.

Many a carcase they left to be carrion,
 Many a livid one, many a sallow-skin—
 Left for the white-tail'd eagle to tear
 it, and
 Left for the horny-nibb'd raven to
 rend it, and
 Gave to the garbaging war-hawk to
 gorge it, and
 That gray beast, the wolf of the weald.

XV.

Never had huger
 Slaughter of heroes

¹ Lit. 'the gathering of men.' ² Dublin.

Slain by the sword-edge—
Such as old writers
Have writ of in histories—
Hapt in this isle, since
Up from the East hither
Saxon and Angle from
Over the broad billow
Broke into Britain with
Haughty war-workers who
Harried the Welshman, when
Earls that were lured by the
Hunger of glory gat
Hold of the land.

ACHILLES OVER THE
TRENCH.

ILIAD, XVIII. 202.

So saying, light-foot Iris pass'd away.
Then rose Achilles dear to Zeus; and
round
The warrior's puissant shoulders
Pallas flung
Her fringed ægis, and around his
head
The glorious goddess wreath'd a
golden cloud,
And from it lighted an all-shining
flame.
As when a smoke from a city goes to
heaven
Far off from out an island girt by
foes,
All day the men contend in grievous
war
From their own city, but with set of
sun
Their fires flame thickly, and aloft the
glare
Flies streaming, if perchance the
neighbors round
May see, and sail to help them in the
war;
So from his head the splendor went
to heaven.
From wall to dyke he stept, he stood,
nor join'd
The Achæans—honoring his wise
mother's word—
There standing, shouted, and Pallas
far away

Call'd; and a boundless panic shook
the foe,
For like the clear voice when a trumpet
shrills,
Blown by the fierce beleaguers of a
town,
So rang the clear voice of Æakidês;
And when the brazen cry of Æakidês
Was heard among the Trojans, all
their hearts
Were troubled, and the full-maned
horses whirl'd
The chariots backward, knowing
griefs at hand;
And sheer-astounded were the chariot-
eers
To see the dread, unweariable fire
That always o'er the great Peleion's
head
Burn'd, for the bright-eyed goddess
made it burn.
Thrice from the dyke he sent his
mighty shout,
Thrice backward reel'd the Trojans
and allies;
And there and then twelve of their
noblest died
Among their spears and chariots.

TO PRINCESS FREDERICA ON
HER MARRIAGE.

O YOU that were eyes and light to
the King till he past away
From the darkness of life—
He saw not his daughter—he blest her:
the blind King sees you to-day,
He blesses the wife.

SIR JOHN FRANKLIN.

ON THE CENOTAPH IN WESTMINSTER
ABBEY.

NOT here! the white North has thy
bones; and thou,
Heroic sailor-soul,
Art passing on thine happier voyage
now
Toward no earthly pole.

TO DANTE.

(WRITTEN AT REQUEST OF THE
FLORENTINES.)

KING, that hast reign'd six hundred
years, and grown
In power, and ever growest, since
thine own

Fair Florence honoring thy nativity,
Thy Florence now the crown of
Italy,
Hath sought the tribute of a verse
from me,
I, wearing but the garland of a day,
Cast at thy feet one flower that fades
away.

TIRESIAS

AND OTHER POEMS.

TO E. FITZGERALD.

OLD FITZ, who from your suburb
grange,

Where once I tarried for a while,
Glance at the wheeling Orb of change,
And greet it with a kindly smile ;
Whom yet I see as there you sit

Beneath your sheltering garden-
tree,

And watch your doves about you flit,
And plant on shoulder, hand and
knee,

Or on your head their rosy feet,
As if they knew your diet spares
Whatever moved in that full sheet

Let down to Peter at his prayers ;
Who live on milk and meal and
grass ;

And once for ten long weeks I tried
Your table of Pythagoras,

And seem'd at first 'a thing en-
skied'

(As Shakespeare has it) airy-light
To float above the ways of men,
Then fell from that half-spiritual
height

Chill'd, till I tasted flesh again
One night when earth was winter-
black,

And all the heavens flash'd in
frost ;

And on me, half-asleep, came back
That wholesome heat the blood
had lost,

And set me climbing icy capes
And glaciers, over which there
rol'd

To meet me long-arm'd vines with
grapes

Of Eshcol hugeness ; for the cold
Without, and warmth within me,
wrought

To mould the dream ; but none can
say

That Lenten fare makes Lenten
thought,

Who reads your golden Eastern
lay,

Than which I know no version done
In English more divinely well ;

A planet equal to the sun
Which cast it, that large infidel

Your Omar ; and your Omar drew
Full-handed plaudits from our best

In modern letters, and from two,
Old friends outvaluing all the rest,

Two voices heard on earth no more ;
But we old friends are still alive,

And I am nearing seventy-four,
While you have touch'd at seventy-
five,

And so I send a birthday line
Of greeting ; and my son, who dipt

In some forgotten book of mine
With sallow scraps of manuscript,

And dating many a year ago,
Has hit on this, which you will take

My Fitz, and welcome, as I know
Less for its own than for the sake

Of one recalling gracious times,
When, in our younger London
days,
You found some merit in my rhymes,
And I more pleasure in your
praise.

TIRESIAS.

I WISH I were as in the years of old,
While yet the blessed daylight made
itself

Ruddy thro' both the roofs of sight,
and woke

These eyes, now dull, but then so
keen to seek

The meanings ambush'd under all
they saw,

The flight of birds, the flame of sacri-
fice,

What omens may foreshadow fate to
man

And woman, and the secret of the
Gods.

My son, the Gods, despite of
human prayer,

Are slower to forgive than human
kings.

The great God, Arês, burns in anger
still

Against the guiltless heirs of him
from Tyre,

Our Cadmus, out of whom thou art,
who found

Beside the springs of Dircê, smote,
and still'd

Thro' all its folds the multitudinous
beast,

The dragon, which our trembling
fathers call'd

The God's own son.

A tale, that told to me,
When but thine age, by age as winter-
white

As mine is now, amazed, but made
me yearn

For larger glimpses of that more than
man

Which rolls the heavens, and lifts,
and lays the deep,

Yet loves and hates with mortal hates
and loves,

And moves unseen among the ways
of men.

Then, in my wanderings all the
lands that lie

Subjected to the Heliconian ridge
Have heard this footstep fall, altho'
my wont

Was more to scale the highest of the
heights

With some strange hope to see the
nearer God.

One naked peak—the sister of the
sun

Would climb from out the dark, and
linger there

To silver all the valleys with her
shafts—

There once, but long ago, five-fold
thy term

Of years, I lay; the winds were dead
for heat;

The noonday crag made the hand
burn; and sick

For shadow—not one bush was near
—I rose

Following a torrent till its myriad
falls

Found silence in the hollows under-
neath.

There in a secret olive-glade I saw
Pallas Athene climbing from the bath
In anger; yet one glittering foot dis-
turb'd

The lucid well; one snowy knee was
prest

Against the margin flowers; a dread-
ful light

Came from her golden hair, her golden
helm

And all her golden armor on the
grass,

And from her virgin breast, and virgin
eyes

Remaining fixt on mine, till mine grew
dark

For ever, and I heard a voice that
said

'Henceforth be blind, for thou hast
seen too much,

And speak the truth that no man may
believe.'

Son, in the hidden world of sight,
that lives

Behind this darkness, I behold her
 still,
 Beyond all work of those who carve
 the stone,
 Beyond all dreams of Godlike woman-
 hood,
 Ineffable beauty, out of whom, at a
 glance,
 And as it were, perforce, upon me
 flash'd
 The power of prophesying—but to me
 No power—so chain'd and coupled
 with the curse
 Of blindness and their unbelief, who
 heard
 And heard not, when I spake of
 famine, plague,
 Shrine-shattering earthquake, fire,
 flood, thunderbolt,
 And angers of the Gods for evil done
 And expiation lack'd—no power on
 Fate,
 Theirs, or mine own! for when the
 crowd would roar
 For blood, for war, whose issue was
 their doom,
 To cast wise words among the multi-
 tude
 Was flinging fruit to lions; nor, in
 hours
 Of civil outbreak, when I knew the
 twain
 Would each waste each, and bring on
 both the yoke
 Of stronger states, was mine the voice
 to curb
 The madness of our cities and their
 kings.
 Who ever turn'd upon his heel to
 hear
 My warning that the tyranny of one
 Was prelude to the tyranny of all?
 My counsel that the tyranny of all
 Led backward to the tyranny of one?
 This power hath work'd no good to
 aught that lives,
 And these blind hands were useless
 in their wars.
 O therefore that the unfulfill'd desire,
 The grief for ever born from griefs to
 be,
 The boundless yearning of the
 Prophet's heart—

Could *that* stand forth, and like a
 statue, rear'd
 To some great citizen, win all praise
 from all
 Who past it, saying, 'That was he!'
 In vain!
 Virtue must shape itself in deed, and
 those
 Whom weakness or necessity have
 cramp'd
 Within themselves, immerging, each,
 his urn
 In his own well, draw solace as he
 may.
 Menœceus, thou hast eyes, and I
 can hear
 Too plainly what full tides of onset
 sap
 Our seven high gates, and what a
 weight of war
 Rides on those ringing axles! jingle
 of bits,
 Shouts, arrows, tramp of the horn-
 footed horse
 That grind the glebe to powder!
 Stony showers
 Of that ear-stunning hail of Arês
 crash
 Along the sounding walls. Above,
 below,
 Shock after shock, the song-built
 towers and gates
 Reel, bruised and butted with the
 shuddering
 War-thunder of iron rams; and from
 within
 The city comes a murmur void of
 joy,
 Lest she be taken captive—maidens,
 wives,
 And mothers with their babblers of
 the dawn,
 And oldest age in shadow from the
 night,
 Falling about their shrines before
 their Gods,
 And wailing 'Save us.'
 And they wail to thee!
 These eyeless eyes, that cannot see
 thine own,
 See this, that only in thy virtue lies
 The saving of our Thebes; for, yes-
 ter-night,

To me, the great God Arês, whose
 one bliss
 Is war, and human sacrifice—himself
 Blood-red from battle, spear and
 helmet tipt
 With stormy light as on a mast at
 sea,
 Stood out before a darkness, crying
 'Thebes,
 Thy Thebes shall fall and perish, for
 I loathe
 The seed of Cadmus—yet if one of
 these
 By his own hand—if one of these——'
 My son,
 No sound is breathed so potent to
 coerce,
 And to conciliate, as their names who
 dare
 For that sweet mother land which
 gave them birth
 Nobly to do, nobly to die. Their
 names,
 Graven on memorial columns, are a
 song
 Heard in the future; few, but more
 than wall
 And rampart, their examples reach a
 hand
 Far thro' all years, and everywhere
 they meet
 And kindle generous purpose, and the
 strength
 To mould it into action pure as
 theirs.
 Fairer thy fate than mine, if life's
 best end
 Be to end well! and thou refusing
 this,
 Unvenerable will thy memory be
 While men shall move the lips: but
 if thou dare—
 Thou, one of these, the race of Cad-
 mus—then
 No stone is fitted in yon marble
 girth
 Whose echo shall not tongue thy
 glorious doom,
 Nor in this pavement but shall ring
 thy name
 To every hoof that clangs it, and the
 springs
 Of Dircê laving yonder battle-plain,

Heard from the roofs by night, will
 murmur thee
 To thine own Thebes, while Thebes
 thro' thee shall stand
 Firm-based with all her Gods.
 The Dragon's cave
 Half hid, they tell me, now in flowing
 vines—
 Where once he dwelt and whence he
 roll'd himself
 At dead of night—thou knowest, and
 that smooth rock
 Before it, altar-fashion'd, where of
 late
 The woman-breasted Sphinx, with
 wings drawn back,
 Folded her lion paws, and look'd to
 Thebes.
 There blanch the bones of whom she
 slew, and these
 Mixt with her own, because the fierce
 beast found
 A wiser than herself, and dash'd her-
 self
 Dead in her rage: but thou art wise
 enough,
 Tho' young, to love thy wiser, blunt
 the curse
 Of Pallas, hear, and tho' I speak the
 truth
 Believe I speak it, let thine own hand
 strike
 Thy youthful pulses into rest and
 quench
 The red God's anger, fearing not to
 plunge
 Thy torch of life in darkness, rather—
 thou
 Rejoicing that the sun, the moon, the
 stars
 Send no such light upon the ways of
 men
 As one great deed.
 Thither, my son, and there
 Thou, that hast never known the
 embrace of love,
 Offer thy maiden life.
 This useless hand!
 I felt one warm tear fall upon it.
 Gone!
 He will achieve his greatness.
 But for me,
 I would that I were gather'd to my rest,

And mingled with the famous kings
 of old,
 On whom about their ocean-islets
 flash
 The faces of the Gods—the wise
 man's word,
 Here trampled by the populace under-
 foot,
 There crown'd with worship—and
 these eyes will find
 The men I knew, and watch the char-
 iot whirl
 About the goal again, and hunters
 race
 The shadowy lion, and the warrior-
 kings,
 In height and prowess more than hu-
 man, strive
 Again for glory, while the golden lyre
 Is ever sounding in heroic ears
 Heroic hymns, and every way the
 vales
 Wind, clouded with the grateful in-
 cense-fume
 Of those who mix all odor to the
 Gods
 On one far height in one far-shining
 fire.

'One height and one far-shining fire'
 And while I fancied that my friend
 For this brief idyll would require
 A less diffuse and opulent end,
 And would defend his judgment well,
 If I should deem it over nice—
 The tolling of his funeral bell
 Broke on my Pagan Paradise,
 And mixt the dream of classic times
 And all the phantoms of the
 dream,
 With present grief, and made the
 rhymes,
 That miss'd his living welcome,
 seem
 Like would-be guests an hour too late,
 Who down the highway moving on
 With easy laughter find the gate
 Is bolted, and the master gone.
 Gone into darkness, that full light
 Of friendship! past, in sleep, away
 By night, into the deeper night!

The deeper night? A clearer day
 Than our poor twilight dawn on
 earth—

If night, what barren toil to be!
 What life, so maim'd by night, were
 worth

Our living out? Not mine to me
 Remembering all the golden hours
 Now silent, and so many dead,
 And him the last; and laying flowers,
 This wreath, above his honor'd head
 And praying that, when I from hence,
 Shall fade with him into the un-
 known,

My close of earth's experience
 May prove as peaceful as his own.

THE WRECK.

I.

HIDE me, Mother! my Fathers be-
 long'd to the church of old,
 I am driven by storm and sin and
 death to the ancient fold,
 I cling to the Catholic Cross once
 more, to the Faith that saves,
 My brain is full of the crash of
 wrecks, and the roar of waves,
 My life itself is a wreck, I have sul-
 lied a noble name,
 I am flung from the rushing tide of
 the world as a waif of shame,
 I am roused by the wail of a child,
 and awake to a livid light,
 And a ghastlier face than ever has
 haunted a grave by night,
 I would hide from the storm without,
 I would flee from the storm
 within,
 I would make my life one prayer for
 a soul that died in his sin,
 I was the tempter, Mother, and mine
 was the deeper fall;
 I will sit at your feet, I will hide my
 face, I will tell you all.

II.

He that they gave me to, Mother, a
 heedless and innocent bride—
 I never have wrong'd his heart, I
 have only wounded his pride—



"STOLE THE SEED BY NIGHT."—Page 107.

Spain in his blood and the Jew—
 dark-visaged, stately and tall—
 A princelier-looking man never stept
 thro' a Prince's hall.
 And who, when his anger was kindled,
 would venture to give him the nay?
 And a man men fear is a man to be
 loved by the women they say.
 And I could have loved him too, if
 the blossom can doat on the blight,
 Or the young green leaf rejoice in the
 frost that sears it at night;
 He would open the books that I
 prized, and toss them away
 with a yawn,
 Repell'd by the magnet of Art to the
 which my nature was drawn,
 The word of the Poet by whom the
 deeps of the world are stirr'd,
 The music that robes it in language
 beneath and beyond the word!
 My Shelley would fall from my hands
 when he cast a contemptuous
 glance
 From where he was poring over his
 Tables of Trade and Finance;
 My hands, when I heard him coming,
 would drop from the chords or
 the keys,
 But ever I fail'd to please him, how-
 ever I strove to please—
 All day long far-off in the cloud of the
 city, and there
 Lost, head and heart, in the chances
 of dividend, consol, and share—
 And at home if I sought for a kindly
 caress, being woman and weak,
 His formal kiss fell chill as a flake of
 snow on the cheek:
 And so, when I bore him a girl, when
 I held it aloft in my joy,
 He look'd at it coldly, and said to me
 'Pity it isn't a boy.'
 The one thing given me, to love and
 to live for, glanced at in scorn!
 The child that I felt I could die for—
 as if she were basely born!
 I had lived a wild-flower life, I was
 planted now in a tomb,
 The daisy will shut to the shadow, I
 closed my heart to the gloom;

I threw myself all abroad—I would
 play my part with the young
 By the low foot-lights of the world—
 and I caught the wreath that
 was flung.

III.

Mother, I have not—however their
 tongues may have babbled of
 me—
 Sinn'd thro' an animal vileness, for all
 but a dwarf was he,
 And all but a hunchback too; and I
 look'd at him, first, askance,
 With pity—not he the knight for an
 amorous girl's romance!
 Tho' wealthy enough to have bask'd
 in the light of a dowerless
 smile,
 Having lands at home and abroad in
 a rich West-Indian isle;
 But I came on him once at a ball, the
 heart of a listening crowd—
 Why, what a brow was there! he was
 seated—speaking aloud
 To women, the flower of the time,
 and men at the helm of state—
 Flowing with easy greatness and
 touching on all things great,
 Science, philosophy, song—till I felt
 myself ready to weep
 For I knew not what, when I heard
 that voice,—as mellow and
 deep
 As a psalm by a mighty master and
 peal'd from an organ,—roll
 Rising and falling—for, Mother, the
 voice was the voice of the
 soul;
 And the sun of the soul made day in
 the dark of his wonderful eyes.
 Here was the hand that would help
 me, would heal me—the heart
 that was wise!
 And he, poor man, when he learnt
 that I hated the ring I wore,
 He helpt me with death, and he heal'd
 me with sorrow for evermore.

IV.

For I broke the bond. That day my
 nurse had brought me the child.

The small sweet face was flush'd, but
 it coo'd to the Mother and
 smiled.
 'Anything ailing,' I ask'd her, 'with
 baby?' She shook her head,
 And the Motherless Mother kiss'd it,
 and turn'd in her haste and
 fled.

V.

Low warm winds had gently breathed
 us away from the land—
 Ten long sweet summer days upon
 deck, sitting hand in hand—
 When he clothed a naked mind with
 the wisdom and wealth of his
 own,
 And I bow'd myself down as a slave
 to his intellectual throne.
 When he coin'd into English gold
 some treasure of classical song,
 When he flouted a statesman's error,
 or flamed at a public wrong,
 When he rose as it were on the wings
 of an eagle beyond me, and
 past
 Over the range and the change of the
 world from the first to the
 last,
 When he spoke of his tropical home
 in the canes by the purple
 tide,
 And the high star-crowns of his
 palms on the deep-wooded
 mountain-side,
 And cliffs all robed in lianas that
 dropt to the brink of his bay,
 And trees like the towers of a min-
 ster, the sons of a winterless
 day.
 'Paradise there!' so he said, but I
 seem'd in Paradise then
 With the first great love I had felt for
 the first and greatest of men;
 Ten long days of summer and sin—if
 it must be so—
 But days of a larger light than I ever
 again shall know—
 Days that will glimmer, I fear, thro'
 life to my latest breath;
 'No frost there,' so he said, 'as in
 truest Love no Death.'

VI.

Mother, one morning a bird with a
 warble plaintively sweet
 Perch'd on the shrouds, and then fell
 fluttering down at my feet;
 I took it, he made it a cage, we fond-
 led it, Stephen and I,
 But it died, and I thought of the
 child for a moment, I scarce
 know why.

VII.

But if sin be sin, not inherited fate, as
 many will say,
 My sin to my desolate little one found
 me at sea on a day,
 When her orphan wail came borne in
 the shriek of a growing wind,
 And a voice rang out in the thunders
 of Ocean and Heaven 'Thou
 hast sinn'd.'
 And down in the cabin were we, for
 the towering crest of the tides
 Plunged on the vessel and swept in a
 cataract off from her sides,
 And ever the great storm grew with a
 howl and a hoot of the blast
 In the rigging, voices of hell—then
 came the crash of the mast.
 'The wages of sin is death,' and there
 I began to weep,
 'I am the Jonah, the crew should
 cast me into the deep,
 For ah God, what a heart was mine to
 forsake her even for you.'
 'Never the heart among women,' he
 said, 'more tender and true.'
 'The heart! not a mother's heart,
 when I left my darling alone.'
 'Comfort yourself, for the heart of the
 father will care for his own.'
 'The heart of the father will spurn
 her,' I cried, 'for the sin of the
 wife,
 The cloud of the mother's shame will
 enfold her and darken her life.'
 Then his pale face twitch'd; 'O Ste-
 phen, I love you, I love you,
 and yet'—
 As I lean'd away from his arms—
 'would God, we had never
 met!'

And he spoke not—only the storm ;
till after a little, I yearn'd
For his voice again, and he call'd to
me 'Kiss me!' and there—as
I turn'd—
'The heart, the heart!' I kiss'd him,
I clung to the sinking form,
And the storm went roaring above us,
and he—was out of the storm.

VIII.

And then, then, Mother, the ship
stagger'd under a thunderous
shock,
That shook us asunder, as if she had
struck and crash'd on a rock ;
For a huge sea smote every soul from
the decks of The Falcon but
one ;
All of them, all but the man that was
lash'd to the helm had gone ;
And I fell—and the storm and the
days went by, but I knew no
more—
Lost myself—lay like the dead by the
dead on the cabin floor,
Dead to the death beside me, and lost
to the loss that was mine,
With a dim dream, now and then, of
a hand giving bread and wine,
Till I woke from the trance, and the
ship stood still, and the skies
were blue,
But the face I had known, O Mother,
was not the face that I knew.

IX.

The strange misfeaturing mask that I
saw so amazed me, that I
Stumbled on deck, half mad. I
would fling myself over and
die !
But one—he was waving a flag—the
one man left on the wreck—
'Woman'—he graspt at my arm—
'stay there'—I crouch'd upon
deck—
'We are sinking, and yet there's
hope: look yonder,' he cried,
'a sail'
In a tone so rough that I broke into
passionate tears, and the wail

Of a beaten babe, till I saw that a
boat was nearing us—then
All on a sudden I thought, I shall
look on the child again.

X.

They lower'd me down the side, and
there in the boat I lay
With sad eyes fixt on the lost sea-
home, as we glided away,
And I sigh'd, as the low dark hull
dipt under the smiling main,
'Had I stay'd with *him*, I had now—
with *him*—been out of my pain.'

XI.

They took us aboard: the crew were
gentle, the captain kind ;
But *I* was the lonely slave of an of-
ten-wandering mind ;
For whenever a rougher gust might
tumble a stormier wave,
'O Stephen,' I moan'd, 'I am coming
to thee in thine Ocean-grave.'
And again, when a balmier breeze
curl'd over a peacefuller sea,
I found myself moaning again 'O
child, I am coming to thee.'

XII.

The broad white brow of the Isle—
that bay with the color'd sand—
Rich was the rose of sunset there, as
we drew to the land ;
All so quiet the ripple would hardly
blanch into spray
At the feet of the cliff; and I pray'd
—'my child'—for I still could
pray—
'May her life be as blissfully calm, be
never gloom'd by the curse
Of a sin, not hers !'

Was it well with the child ?

I wrote to the nurse
Who had borne my flower on her
hiring heart; and an answer
came
Not from the nurse—nor yet to the
wife—to her maiden name !
I shook as I open'd the letter—I knew
that hand too well—

And from it a scrap, clipt out of the
 'deaths' in a paper, fell.
 'Ten long sweet summer days' of
 fever, and want of care!
 And gone—that day of the storm—
 O Mother, she came to me
 there.

DESPAIR.

A MAN and his wife having lost faith in a
 God, and hope of a life to come, and being
 utterly miserable in this, resolve to end
 themselves by drowning. The woman is
 drowned, but the man rescued by a minis-
 ter of the sect he had abandoned.

I.

Is it you, that preach'd in the chapel
 there looking over the sand?
 Follow'd us too that night, and
 dogg'd us, and drew me to
 land?

II.

What did I feel that night? You are
 curious. How should I tell?
 Does it matter so much what I felt?
 You rescued me—yet—was it
 well
 That you came unwish'd for, uncall'd,
 between me and the deep and
 my doom,
 Three days since, three more dark
 days of the Godless gloom
 Of a life without sun, without health,
 without hope, without any
 delight
 In anything here upon earth? but ah
 God, that night, that night
 When the rolling eyes of the light-
 house there on the fatal neck
 Of land running out into rock—they
 had saved many hundreds from
 wreck—
 Glared on our way toward death, I
 remember I thought, as we
 past,
 Does it matter how many they saved?
 we are all of us wreck'd at
 last—

'Do you fear?' and there came thro'
 the roar of the breaker a
 whisper, a breath,
 'Fear? am I not with you? I am
 frightened at life not death.'

III.

And the suns of the limitless Universe
 sparkled and shone in the
 sky,
 Flashing with fires as of God, but we
 knew that their light was a
 lie—
 Bright as with deathless hope—but,
 however they sparkled and
 shone,
 The dark little worlds running round
 them were worlds of woe like
 our own—
 No soul in the heaven above, no soul
 on the earth below,
 A fiery scroll written over with lamen-
 tation and woe.

IV.

See, we were nursed in the drear
 nightfold of your fatalist creed,
 And we turn'd to the growing dawn,
 we had hoped for a dawn
 indeed,
 When the light of a Sun that was
 coming would scatter the
 ghosts of the Past,
 And the cramping creeds that had
 madden'd the peoples would
 vanish at last,
 And we broke away from the Christ,
 our human brother and friend,
 For He spoke, or it seem'd that He
 spoke, of a Hell without help,
 without end.

V.

Hoped for a dawn and it came, but
 the promise had faded away;
 We had past from a cheerless night
 to the glare of a drearier day;
 He is only a cloud and a smoke who
 was once a pillar of fire,
 The guess of a worm in the dust and
 the shadow of its desire—

Of a worm as it writhes in a world of
the weak trodden down by the
strong,

Of a dying worm in a world, all
massacre, murder, and wrong.

VI.

O we poor orphans of nothing—alone
on that lonely shore—

Born of the brainless Nature who
knew not that which she bore!

Trusting no longer that earthly flower
would be heavenly fruit—

Come from the brute, poor souls—no
souls—and to die with the
brute—

VII.

Nay, but I am not claiming your
pity: I know you of old—

Small pity for those that have ranged
from the narrow warmth of
your fold,

Where you bawl'd the dark side of
your faith and a God of eternal
rage,

Till you flung us back on ourselves, and
the human heart, and the Age.

VIII.

But pity—the Pagan held it a vice—
was in her and in me,

Helpless, taking the place of the pity-
ing God that should be!

Pity for all that aches in the grasp of
an idiot power,

And pity for our own selves on an
earth that bore not a flower;

Pity for all that suffers on land or in
air or the deep,

And pity for our own selves till we
long'd for eternal sleep.

IX.

'Lightly step over the sands! the
waters—you hear them call!

Life with its anguish, and horrors,
and errors—away with it all!

And she laid her hand in my own—
she was always loyal and
sweet—

Till the points of the foam in the dusk
came playing about our feet.

There was a strong sea-current would
sweep us out to the main.

'Ah God' tho' I felt as I spoke I was
taking the name in vain—

'Ah God' and we turn'd to each
other, we kiss'd, we embraced,
she and I,

Knowing the Love we were used to
believe everlasting would die:

We had read their know-nothing
books and we lean'd to the
darker side—

Ah God, should we find Him, per-
haps, perhaps, if we died, if we
died;

We never had found Him on earth,
this earth is a fatherless Hell—

'Dear Love, for ever and ever, for
ever and ever farewell,'

Never a cry so desolate, not since the
world began,

Never a kiss so sad, no, not since the
coming of man!

X.

But the blind wave cast me ashore, and
you saved me, a valueless life.

Not a grain of gratitude mine! You
have parted the man from the
wife.

I am left alone on the land, she is all
alone in the sea;

If a curse meant ought, I would curse
you for not having let me be.

XI.

Visions of youth—for my brain was
drunk with the water, it seems;

I had past into perfect quiet at length
out of pleasant dreams,

And the transient trouble of drowning
—what was it when match'd
with the pains

Of the hellish heat of a wretched life
rushing back thro' the veins?

XII.

Why should I live? one son had
forged on his father and fled,

And if I believed in a God, I would
 thank him, the other is dead,
 And there was a baby-girl, that had
 never look'd on the light:
 Happiest she of us all, for she past
 from the night to the night.

XIII.

But the crime, if a crime, of her eldest-
 born, her glory, her boast,
 Struck hard at the tender heart of the
 mother, and broke it almost;
 Tho', glory and shame dying out for
 ever in endless time,
 Does it matter so much whether
 crown'd for a virtue, or hang'd
 for a crime?

XIV.

And ruin'd by *him*, by *him*, I stood
 there, naked, amazed
 In a world of arrogant opulence,
 fear'd myself turning crazed,
 And I would not be mock'd in a mad-
 house! and she, the delicate
 wife,
 With a grief that could only be cured,
 if cured, by the surgeon's
 knife,—

XV.

Why should we bear with an hour of
 torture, a moment of pain,
 If every man die for ever, if all his
 griefs are in vain,
 And the homeless planet at length
 will be wheel'd thro' the silence
 of space,
 Motherless evermore of an ever-
 vanishing race,
 When the worm shall have writhed
 its last, and its last brother-
 worm will have fled
 From the dead fossil skull that is left
 in the rocks of an earth that
 is dead?

XVI.

Have I crazed myself over their horri-
 ble infidel writings? O yes,
 For these are the new dark ages, you
 see, of the popular press,

When the bat comes out of his cave,
 and the owls are whooping at
 noon,

And Doubt is the lord of this dung-
 hill and crows to the sun and
 the moon,

Till the Sun and the Moon of our
 science are both of them turn'd
 into blood,

And Hope will have broken her
 heart, running after a shadow
 of good;

For their knowing and know-nothing
 books are scatter'd from hand
 to hand—

We have knelt in your know-all
 chapel too looking over the
 sand.

XVII.

What! I should call on that Infinite
 Love that has served us so
 well?

Infinite cruelty rather that made ever-
 lasting Hell,

Made us, foreknew us, foredoom'd us,
 and does what he will with his
 own;

Better our dead brute mother who
 never has heard us groan!

XVIII.

Hell? if the souls of men were im-
 mortal, as men have been told,
 The lecher would cleave to his lusts,
 and the miser would yearn for
 his gold,

And so there were Hell for ever! but
 were there a God as you say,

His Love would have power over Hell
 till it utterly vanish'd away.

XIX.

Ah yet—I have had some glimmer, at
 times, in my gloomiest woe,
 Of a God behind all—after all—the
 great God for aught that I
 know;

But the God of Love and of Hell
 together—they cannot be
 thought,

If there be such a God, may the
Great God curse him and bring
him to nought!

xx.

Blasphemy! whose is the fault? is it
mine? for why would you save
A madman to vex you with wretched
words, who is best in his grave?

Blasphemy! ay, why not, being damn'd
beyond hope of grace?

O would I were yonder with her, and
away from your faith and your
face!

Blasphemy! true! I have scared you
pale with my scandalous talk,
But the blasphemy to *my* mind lies all
in the way that you walk.

xxi.

Hence! she is gone! can I stay? can
I breathe divorced from the
Past?

You needs must have good lynx-eyes
if I do not escape you at last.

Our orthodox coroner doubtless will
find it a *felo-de-se*,

And the stake and the cross-road,
fool, if you will, does it matter
to me?

THE ANCIENT SAGE.

A THOUSAND summers ere the time
of Christ

From out his ancient city came a Seer
Whom one that loved, and honor'd
him, and yet

Was no disciple, richly garb'd, but
worn

From wasteful living, follow'd—in
his hand

A scroll of verse—till that old man
before

A cavern whence an affluent fountain
pour'd

From darkness into daylight, turn'd
and spoke.

This wealth of waters might but seem
to draw

From yon dark cave, but, son, the
source is higher,

Yon summit half-a-league in air—and
higher,

The cloud that hides it—higher still,
the heavens

Whereby the cloud was moulded, and
whereout

The cloud descended. Force is from
the heights.

I am wearied of our city, son, and go
To spend my one last year among the
hills.

What hast thou there? Some death-
song for the Ghouls

To make their banquet relish? let me
read.

“How far thro’ all the bloom and
brake

That nightingale is heard!
What power but the bird’s could make

This music in the bird?
How summer-bright are yonder skies,

And earth as fair in hue!
And yet what sign of aught that lies

Behind the green and blue?
But man to-day is fancy’s fool

As man hath ever been.
The nameless Power, or Powers, that

rule
Were never heard or seen.”

If thou would’st hear the Nameless,
and wilt dive

Into the Temple-cave of thine own
self,

There, brooding by the central altar,
thou

May’st haply learn the Nameless hath
a voice,

By which thou wilt abide, if thou be
wise,

As if thou knewest, tho’ thou canst
not know;

For Knowledge is the swallow on the
lake

That sees and stirs the surface-
shadow there

But never yet hath dipt into the
abysm,

The Abyss of all Abysses, beneath,
within

The blue of sky and sea, the green of
earth,
And in the million-millionth of a
grain
Which cleft and cleft again for ever-
more,
And ever vanishing, never vanishes,
To me, my son, more mystic than
myself,

Or even than the Nameless is to me.
And when thou sendest thy free
soul thro' heaven,
Nor understandest bound nor bound-
lessness,

Thou seest the Nameless of the hun-
dred names.

And if the Nameless should with-
draw from all
Thy frailty counts most real, all thy
world
Might vanish like thy shadow in the
dark.

"And since—from when this earth
began—

The Nameless never came
Among us, never spake with man,
And never named the Name"—

Thou canst not prove the Nameless,
O my son,

Nor canst thou prove the world thou
movest in,

Thou canst not prove that thou art
body alone,

Nor canst thou prove that thou art
spirit alone,

Nor canst thou prove that thou art
both in one :

Thou canst not prove thou art im-
mortal, no

Nor yet that thou art mortal—nay my
son,

Thou canst not prove that I, who
speak with thee,

Am not thyself in converse with thy-
self,

For nothing worthy proving can be
proven,

Nor yet disproven: wherefore thou
be wise,

Cleave ever to the sunnier side of
doubt,

And cling to Faith beyond the forms
of Faith!

She reels not in the storm of warring
words,

She brightens at the clash of 'Yes'
and 'No,'

She sees the Best that glimmers thro'
the Worst,

She feels the Sun is hid but for a
night,

She spies the summer thro' the win-
ter bud,

She tastes the fruit before the blossom
falls,

She hears the lark within the song-
less egg,

She finds the fountain where they
wail'd 'Mirage'!

"What Power? aught akin to
mind,

The mind in me and you?
Or power as of the Gods gone
blind

Who see not what they do?"

But some in yonder city hold, my son,
That none but Gods could build this
house of ours,

So beautiful, vast, various, so beyond
All work of man, yet, like all work of
man,

A beauty with defect—till That
which knows,

And is not known, but felt thro' what
we feel

Within ourselves is highest, shall
descend

On this half-deed, and shape it at the
last

According to the Highest in the High-
est.

"What Power but the Years that
make

And break the vase of clay,
And stir the sleeping earth, and wake

The bloom that fades away?
What rulers but the Days and Hours

That cancel weal with woe,
And wind the front of youth with

flowers,
And cap our age with snow?"

The days and hours are ever glancing by,
 And seem to flicker past thro' sun and shade,
 Or short, or long, as Pleasure leads, or Pain;
 But with the Nameless is nor Day nor Hour;
 Tho' we, thin minds, who creep from thought to thought,
 Break into 'Thens' and 'Whens' the Eternal Now:
 This double seeming of the single world!—
 My words are like the babblings in a dream
 Of nightmare, when the babblings break the dream.
 But thou be wise in this dream-world of ours,
 Nor take thy dial for thy deity,
 But make the passing shadow serve thy will.

"The years that made the stripling wise

Undo their work again,
 And leave him, blind of heart and eyes,
 The last and least of men;
 Who clings to earth, and once would dare

Hell-heat or Arctic cold,
 And now one breath of cooler air
 Would loose him from his hold;
 His winter chills him to the root,
 He withers marrow and mind;
 The kernel of the shrivell'd fruit
 Is jutting thro' the rind;
 The tiger spasms tear his chest,
 The palsy wags his head;
 The wife, the sons, who love him best
 Would fain that he were dead;
 The griefs by which he once was wrung
 Were never worth the while"—

Who knows? or whether this earth-narrow life
 Be yet but yolk, and forming in the shell?

"The shaft of scorn that once had stung
 But wakes a dotard smile."

The placid gleam of sunset after storm!

"The statesman's brain that sway'd the past

Is feebler than his knees;
 The passive sailor wrecks at last
 In ever-silent seas;
 The warrior hath forgot his arms,
 The Learned all his lore;
 The changing market frets or charms
 The merchant's hope no more;
 The prophet's beacon burn'd in vain,
 And now is lost in cloud;
 The plowman passes, bent with pain,
 To mix with what he plow'd;
 The poet whom his Age would quote
 As heir of endless fame—
 He knows not ev'n the book he wrote,
 Not even his own name.
 For man has overlived his day,
 And, darkening in the light,
 Scarce feels the senses break away
 To mix with ancient Night."

The shell must break before the bird can fly.

"The years that when my Youth began
 Had set the lily and rose
 By all my ways where'er they ran,
 Have ended mortal foes;
 My rose of love for ever gone,
 My lily of truth and trust—
 They made her lily and rose in one,
 And changed her into dust.
 O rosetree planted in my grief,
 And growing, on her tomb,
 Her dust is greening in your leaf,
 Her blood is in your bloom.
 O slender lily waving there,
 And laughing back the light,
 In vain you tell me 'Earth is fair'
 When all is dark as night."

My son, the world is dark with griefs and graves,
 So dark that men cry out against the Heavens.
 Who knows but that the darkness is in man?
 The doors of Night may be the gates of Light;

For wert thou born or blind or deaf,
 and then
 Suddenly heal'd, how would'st thou
 glory in all
 The splendors and the voices of the
 world!
 And we, the poor earth's dying race,
 and yet
 No phantoms, watching from a phan-
 tom shore
 Await the last and largest sense to
 make
 The phantom walls of this illusion
 fade,
 And show us that the world is wholly
 fair.

"But vain the tears for darken'd
 years
 As laughter over wine,
 And vain the laughter as the tears,
 O brother, mine or thine,

For all that laugh, and all that
 weep
 And all that breathe are one
 Slight ripple on the boundless deep
 That moves, and all is gone."

But that one ripple on the boundless
 deep
 Feels that the deep is boundless, and
 itself
 For ever changing form, but evermore
 One with the boundless motion of the
 deep.

"Yet wine and laughter friends!
 and set
 The lamps alight, and call
 For golden music, and forget
 The darkness of the pall."

If utter darkness closed the day,
 my son—
 But earth's dark forehead flings
 athwart the heavens
 Her shadow crown'd with stars—and
 yonder—out
 To northward—some that never set,
 but pass
 From sight and night to lose them-
 selves in day.

I hate the black negation of the bier,
 And wish the dead, as happier than
 ourselves
 And higher, having climb'd one step
 beyond
 Our village miseries, might be borne
 in white
 To burial or to burning, hymn'd from
 hence
 With songs in praise of death, and
 crown'd with flowers!

"O worms and maggots of to-day
 Without their hope of wings!"

But louder than thy rhyme the silent
 Word
 Of that world-prophet in the heart of
 man.

"Tho' some have gleams or so they
 say
 Of more than mortal things."

To-day? but what of yesterday? for oft
 On me, when boy, there came what
 then I call'd,
 Who knew no books and no philoso-
 phies,
 In my boy-phrase 'The Passion of the
 Past.'
 The first gray streak of earliest sum-
 mer-dawn,
 The last long stripe of waning crimson
 gloom,
 As if the late and early were but one—
 A height, a broken grange, a grove, a
 flower
 Had murmurs 'Lost and gone and
 lost and gone!'
 A breath, a whisper—some divine
 farewell—
 Desolate sweetness—far and far
 away—
 What had he loved, what had he lost,
 the boy?
 I know not and I speak of what has
 been.
 And more, my son! for more than
 once when I
 Sat all alone, revolving in myself,
 The word that is the symbol of my-
 self,

The mortal limit of the Self was
loosed,
And past into the Nameless, as a
cloud
Melts into Heaven. I touch'd my
limbs, the limbs
Were strange not mine—and yet no
shade of doubt,
But utter clearness, and thro' loss of
Self
The gain of such large life as match'd
with ours
Were Sun to spark—unshadowable
in words,
Themselves but shadows of a shadow-
world

“And idle gleams will come and go,
But still the clouds remain;”

The clouds themselves are children of
the Sun.

“And Night and Shadow rule
below
When only Day should reign.”

And Day and Night are children of
the Sun,
And idle gleams to thee are light to
me.
Some say, the Light was father of the
Night,
And some, the Night was father of the
Light,
No night no day!—I touch thy world
again—
No ill no good! such counter-terms,
my son,
Are border-races, holding, each its
own
By endless war: but night enough is
there
In yon dark city: get thee back: and
since
The key to that weird casket, which
for thee
But holds a skull, is neither thine nor
mine,
But in the hand of what is more than
man,
Or in man's hand when man is more
than man,

Let be thy wail and help thy fellow
men,
And make thy gold thy vassal not thy
king,
And fling free alms into the beggar's
bowl,
And send the day into the darken'd
heart;
Nor list for guerdon in the voice of
men,
A dying echo from a fallen wall;
Nor care—for Hunger hath the Evil
eye—
To vex the noon with fiery gems, or
fold
Thy presence in the silk of sumptuous
looms;
Nor roll thy viands on a luscious
tongue,
Nor drown thyself with flies in honied
wine;
Nor thou be rageful, like a handled
bee,
And lose thy life by usage of thy
sting;
Nor harm an adder thro' the lust for
harm,
Nor make a snail's horn shrink for
wantonness;
And more—think well! Do-well will
follow thought,
And in the fatal sequence of this world
An evil thought may soil thy child-
ren's blood;
But curb the beast would cast thee in
the mire,
And leave the hot swamp of voluptu-
ousness
A cloud between the Nameless and
thyself,
And lay thine uphill shoulder to the
wheel,
And climb the Mount of Blessing,
whence, if thou
Look higher, then—perchance—thou
mayest—beyond
A hundred ever-rising mountain lines,
And past the range of Night and
Shadow—see
The high-heaven dawn of more than
mortal day
Strike on the Mount of Vision!
So, farewell.

THE FLIGHT.

I.

ARE you sleeping? have you forgotten?
do not sleep, my sister dear!
How *can* you sleep? the morning
brings the day I hate and fear;
The cock has crow'd already once,
he crows before his time;
Awake! the creeping glimmer steals,
the hills are white with rime.

II.

Ah, clasp me in your arms, sister, ah,
fold me to your breast!
Ah, let me weep my fill once more,
and cry myself to rest!
To rest? to rest and wake no more
were better rest for me,
Than to waken every morning to that
face I loathe to see:

III.

I envied your sweet slumber, all
night so calm you lay,
The night was calm, the morn is
calm, and like another day;
But I could wish yon moaning sea
would rise and burst the shore,
And such a whirlwind blow these
woods, as never blew before.

IV.

For, one by one, the stars went down
across the gleaming pane.
And project after project rose, and all
of them were vain;
The blackthorn-blossom fades and
falls and leaves the bitter sloe,
The hope I catch at vanishes and
youth is turn'd to woe.

V.

Come, speak a little comfort! all
night I pray'd with tears,
And yet no comfort came to me, and
now the morn appears,
When he will tear me from your side,
who bought me for his slave:
This father pays his debt with me, and
weds me to my grave.

VI.

What father, this or mine, was he,
who, on that summer day
When I had fall'n from off the crag
we clamber'd up in play,
Found, fear'd me dead, and groan'd,
and took and kiss'd me, and
again
He kiss'd me; and I loved him then;
he *was* my father then.

VII.

No father now, the tyrant vassal of a
tyrant vice!
The Godless Jephtha vows his child
... to one cast of the dice.
These ancient woods, this Hall at last
will go—perhaps have gone,
Except his own meek daughter yield
her life, heart, soul to one—

VIII.

To one who knows I scorn him. O
the formal mocking bow,
The cruel smile, the courtly phrase
that masks his malice now—
But often in the sidelong eyes a gleam
of all things ill—
It is not Love but Hate that weds a
bride against her will;

IX.

Hate, that would pluck from this true
breast the locket that I wear,
The precious crystal into which I
braided Edwin's hair!
The love that keeps this heart alive
beats on it night and day—
One golden curl, his golden gift, before
he past away.

X.

He left us weeping in the woods; his
boat was on the sand;
How slowly down the rocks he went,
how loth to quit the land!
And all my life was darken'd, as I saw
the white sail run,
And darken, up that lane of light into
the setting sun.

XI.

How often have we watch'd the sun
fade from us thro' the West,
And follow Edwin to those isles, those
islands of the Blest!
Is *he* not there? would I were there,
the friend, the bride, the wife,
With him, where summer never dies,
with Love, the Sun of Life!

XII.

O would I were in Edwin's arms—
once more—to feel his breath
Upon my cheek—on Edwin's ship,
with Edwin, ev'n in death,
Tho' all about the shuddering wreck
the death-white sea should rave,
Or if lip were laid to lip on the pillows
of the wave.

XIII.

Shall I take *him*? I kneel with *him*?
I swear and swear forsworn
To love him most, whom most I
loathe, to honor whom I scorn?
The Fiend would yell, the grave
would yawn, my mother's ghost
would rise—
To lie, to lie—in God's own house—
the blackest of all lies!

XIV.

Why—rather than that hand in mine,
tho' every pulse would freeze
I'd sooner fold an icy corpse dead of
some foul disease:
Wed him? I will not wed him, let
them spurn me from the doors,
And I will wander till I die about the
barren moors.

XV.

The dear, mad bride who stabb'd her
bridegroom on her bridal
night—
If mad, then I am mad, but sane, if
she were in the right.
My father's madness makes me mad—
but words are only words!
I am not mad, not yet, not quite—
There! listen how the birds

XVI.

Begin to warble yonder in the budding
orchard trees!
The lark has past from earth to
Heaven upon the morning
breeze!
How gladly, were I one of those, how
early would I wake!
And yet the sorrow that I bear is
sorrow for *his* sake.

XVII.

They love their mates, to whom they
sing; or else their songs, that
meet
The morning with such music, would
never be so sweet!
And tho' these fathers will not hear,
the blessed Heavens are just,
And Love is fire, and burns the feet
would trample it to dust.

XVIII.

A door was open'd in the house—
who? who? my father sleeps!
A stealthy foot upon the stair! he—
some one—this way creeps!
If he? yes, he . . . lurks, listens, fears
his victim may have fled—
He! where is some sharp-pointed
thing? he comes, and finds me
dead.

XIX.

Not he, not yet! and time to act—but
how my temples burn!
And idle fancies flutter me, I know
not where to turn;
Speak to me, sister; counsel me; this
marriage must not be.
You only know the love that makes
the world a world to me!

XX.

Our gentle mother, had *she* lived—but
we were left alone:
That other left us to ourselves; he
cared not for his own;
So all the summer long we roam'd in
these wild woods of ours,
My Edwin loved to call us then 'His
two wild woodland flowers.'

XXI.

Wild flowers blowing side by side in
 God's free light and air,
 Wild flowers of the secret woods, when
 Edwin found us there,
 Wild woods in which we roved with
 him, and heard his passionate
 vow,
 Wild woods in which we rove no
 more, if we be parted now !

XXII.

You will not leave me thus in grief to
 wander forth forlorn ;
 We never changed a bitter word, not
 once since we were born ;
 Our dying mother join'd our hands ;
 she knew this father well ;
 She bad us love, like souls in Heaven,
 and now I fly from Hell,

XXIII.

And you with me ; and we shall light
 upon some lonely shore,
 Some lodge within the waste sea-
 dunes, and hear the waters roar,
 And see the ships from out the West
 go dipping thro' the foam,
 And sunshine on that sail at last which
 brings our Edwin home.

XXIV.

But look, the morning grows apace,
 and lights the old church-tower,
 And lights the clock ! the hand points
 five—O me—it strikes the
 hour—
 I bide no more, I meet my fate, what-
 ever ills betide !
 Arise, my own true sister, come forth !
 the world is wide.

xxv.

And yet my heart is ill at ease, my
 eyes are dim with dew,
 I seem to see a new-dug grave up
 yonder by the yew !
 If we should never more return, but
 wander hand in hand
 With breaking hearts, without a friend,
 and in a distant land.

XXVI.

O sweet, they tell me that the world
 is hard, and harsh of mind,
 But can it be so hard, so harsh, as
 those that should be kind ?
 That matters not : let come what will ;
 at last the end is sure,
 And every heart that loves with truth
 is equal to endure.

TO-MORROW.

I.

HER, that yer Honor was spakin' to ?
 Whin, yer Honor ? last year—
 Standin' here be the bridge, when last
 yer Honor was here ?
 An' yer Honor ye gev her the top of
 the mornin', 'Tomorra' says
 she.
 What did they call her, yer Honor ?
 They call'd her Molly Magee.
 An' yer Honor's the thrue ould blood
 that always manes to be kind,
 But there's rason in all things, yer
 Honor, for Molly was out of
 her mind.

II.

Shure, an' meself remimbers wan
 night comin' down be the
 sthrame,
 An' it seems to me now like a bit of
 yisther-day in a dhrame—
 Here where yer Honor seen her—
 there was but a slip of a moon,
 But I hard thim—Molly Magee wid
 her batchelor, Danny O'Roon—
 'You've been takin' a dhrop o' the
 crathur' an' Danny says 'Troth,
 an' I been
 Dhrinkin' yer health wid Shamus
 O'Shea at Katty's shebeen ;¹
 But I must be lavin' ye soon.'
 'Ochone are ye goin' away ?'
 'Goin' to cut the Sassenach whate' he
 says 'over the say'—

¹ Grog-shop.

'An' whin will ye meet me agin?' an'
I hard him 'Molly asthore,
I'll meet you agin tomorra,' says he,
'be the chapel-door.'

'An' whin are ye goin' to lave me?'
'O' Monday mornin'' says he;
'An' shure thin ye'll meet me to-
morra?'

'Tomorra, tomorra, Machree!'
Thin Molly's ould mother, yer Honor,
that had no likin' for Dan,
Call'd from her cabin an' tould her to
come away from the man,

An' Molly Magee kem flyin' acress
me, as light as a lark,

An' Dan stood there for a minute, an'
thin wint into the dark.

But wirrah! the storm that night—
the tundher, an' rain that fell,
An' the sthrames runnin' down at the
back o' the glin 'ud 'a dhrown'ded
Hell.

III.

But airth was at pace nixt mornin',
an' Hiven in its glory smiled,
As the Holy Mother o' Glory that
smiles at her sleepin' child—

Ethen—she stept an the chapel-green,
an' she turn'd herself roun'

Wid a diamond dhrop in her eye, for
Danny was not to be foun',

An' many's the time that I watch'd
her at mass lettin' down the
tear,

For the Divil a Danny was there, yer
Honor, for forty year.

IV.

Och, Molly Magee, wid the red o' the
rose an' the white o' the May,

An' yer hair as black as the night, an'
yer eyes as bright as the day!

Achora, yer laste little wishper was
sweet as the lilt of a bird!

Acushla, ye set me heart batin' to
music wid ivery word!

An' sorra the Queen wid her sceptre
in sich an illigant han',

An' the fall of yer foot in the dance
was as light as snow an the
lan',

An' the sun kem out of a cloud whin-
iver ye walkt in the shstreet,
An' Shamus O'Shea was yer shadda,
an' laid himself undher yer
feet,

An' I loved ye meself wid a heart
and a half, me darlin', and he
'Ud 'a shot his own sowl dead for a
kiss of ye, Molly Magee.

V.

But shure we wor betther frinds whin
I crack'd his skull for her
sake,

An' he ped me back wid the best he
could give at ould Donovan's
wake—

For the boys wor about her agin whin
Dan didn't come to the fore,

An' Shamus along wid the rest, but
she put thim all to the door.

An', afther, I thried her meself av the
bird 'ud come to me call,

But Molly, begorrah, 'ud listhen to
naither at all, at all.

VI.

An' her nabours an frinds 'ud consowl
an' condowl wid her, airly and
late,

'Your Danny,' they says, 'niver crasst
over say to the Sassenach
whate;

He's gone to the States, aroon, an'
he's married another wife,

An' ye'll niver set eyes an the face of
the thraithur agin in life!

An' to dhrame of a married man,
death alive, is a mortal sin.'

But Molly says 'I'd his hand-promise,
an' shure he'll meet me agin.'

VII.

An' afther her paärints had inter'd
glory, an' both in wan day,

She began to spake to herself, the
crathur, an' wishper, an' say

'Tomorra, Tomorra!' an' Father
Molowny he tuk her in han',

'Molly, you're manin', he says, 'me
dear, av I undherstan',

That ye'll meet your paärints agin an'
 yer Danny O'Roon afore God
 Wid his blessed Marthyrs an' Saints; '
 an' she gev him a frindly nod,
 'Tomorra, Tomorra,' she says, an'
 she didn't intind to desave,
 But her wits wor dead, an' her hair
 was as white as the snow an a
 grave.

VIII.

Arrah now, here last month they wor
 diggin' the bog, an' they foun'
 Dhrownded in black bog-wather a
 corp lyin' undher groun'.

IX.

Yer Honor's own agint, he says to me
 wanst, at Katty's shebeen,
 'The Devil take all the black lan', for
 a blessin' 'ud come wid the
 green!'
 An' where 'ud the poor man, thin, cut
 his bit o' turf for the fire?
 But och! bad scan to the bogs whin
 they swallies the man intire!
 An' sorra the bog that's in Hiven wid
 all the light an' the glow,
 An' there's hate enough, shure, wid-
 out *thim* in the Devil's kitchen
 below.

X.

Thim ould blind nagers in Agypt, I
 hard his Riverence say,
 Could keep their bräthen kings in the
 flesh for the Jidgemint day,
 An', faix, be the piper o' Moses, they
 kep the cat an' the dog,
 But it 'ud 'a been aisier work a' they
 lived be an Irish bog.

XI.

How-an-iyer they laid this body they
 foun' an the grass
 Be the chapel-door, an' the people 'ud
 see it that wint in to mass—
 But a frish gination had riz, an'
 most of the ould was few,
 An' I didn't know him meself, an'
 nōne of the parish knew.

XII.

But Molly kem limp'in' up wid her
 stick, she was lamed iv a knee,
 Thin a slip of a gossoon call'd, 'Div
 ye know him, Molly Magee?'
 An' she stood up strait as the Queen
 of the world—she lifted her
 head—
 'He said he would meet me tomorra!'
 an' dhropt down dead an the
 dead.

XIII.

Och, Molly, we thought, machree, ye
 would start back agin into life,
 Whin we laid yez, aich be aich, at yer
 wake like husban' an' wife.
 Sorra the dhry eye thin but was wet
 for the frinds that was gone!
 Sorra the silent throat but we hard it
 cryin' 'Ochone!'
 An' Shamus O'Shea that has now
 ten childer, hansome an' tall,
 Him an' his childer wor keenin' as if
 he had lost thim all.

XIV.

Thin his Riverence buried thim both
 in wan grave be the dead boor-
 tree,¹
 The young man Danny O'Roon wid
 his ould woman, Molly Magee.

XV.

May all the flowers o' Jeroosilim
 blossom an' spring from the
 grass,
 Imbrashin' an' kissin' aich other—as
 ye did—over yer Crass!
 An' the lark fly out o' the flowers wid
 his song to the Sun an' the
 Moon,
 An' tell thim in Hiven about Molly
 Magee an' her Danny O'Roon,
 Till Holy St. Pether gets up wid his
 kays an' opens the gate!
 An' shure, be the Crass, that's betther
 nor cuttin' the Sassenach whate

¹ Elder-tree.

To be there wid the Blessed Mother,
 an' Saints an' Marthys galore,
 An' singin' yer 'Aves' an' 'Pathers'
 for iver an' ivermore.

XVI.

An' now that I tould yer Honor what-
 iver I hard an' seen,
 Yer Honor 'ill give me a thrifle to
 dhrink yer health in potheen.

THE SPINSTER'S SWEET-
 ARTS.

I.

MILK for my sweet-arts, Bess! fur it
 mun be the time about now
 When Molly cooms in fro' the far-end
 close wi' her paäils fro' the cow.
 Eh! tha be new to the plaäce—thou'rt
 gaäpin—doesn't tha see
 I calls' em arter the fellers es once
 was sweet upo' me?

II.

Naäy to be sewer it be past'er time.
 What maäkes 'er sa laäte?
 Goä to the laäne at the back, an'
 looök thruf Maddison's gaäte!

III.

Sweet-arts! Molly belike may'a
 lighted to-night upo' one.
 Sweet-arts! thanks to the Lord that I
 niver not listen'd to noän!
 So I sits i' my oän armchair wi' my oän
 kettle theree o' the hob,
 An' Tommy the fust, an' Tommy the
 second, an' Steevie an' Rob.

IV.

Rob, coom oop 'ere o' my knee. Thou
 sees that i' spite o' the men
 I 'a kep' thruf thick an' thin my two
 'oonderd a-year to mysen;
 Yis! thaw tha call'd me es pretty es
 ony lass i' the Shere;
 An' thou be es pretty a Tabby, but
 Robby I seed thruf ya theree.

v.

Feyther 'ud saäy I wur ugly es sin,
 an' I beänt not vaäin,
 But I niver wur downright hugly, thaw
 soom 'ud 'a thowt ma plaäin,
 An' I wasn't sa plaäin i' pink ribbons,
 ye said I wur pretty i' pinks,
 An' I liked to 'ear it I did, but I beänt
 sich a fool as ye thinks;
 Ye was stroäkin ma' down wi' the 'air,
 as I be a-stroäkin o' you,
 But whiniver I looöked i' the glass I
 wur sewer that it couldn't be
 true;
 Niver wur pretty, not I, but ye know'd
 it wur pleasant to 'ear,
 Thaw it warn't not me es wur pretty,
 but my two 'oonderd a-year.

VI.

D'ya mind the murnin' when we was
 a-walkin' together, an' stood
 By the claäy'd-oop pond, that the
 foälk be sa scared at, i'
 Gigglesby wood,
 Wheer the poor wrench drowndid
 hersen, black Sal, es 'ed been
 disgraäced?
 An' I feel'd thy arm es I stood wur a-
 creeäpin about my waäist;
 An' me es wur allus afear'd of a man's
 gittin' ower fond,
 I sidled awaäy an' awaäy till I plumpt
 foot fust i' the pond;
 And, Robby, I niver 'a liked tha sa
 well, as I did that daäy,
 Fur tha joompt in thysen, an' tha
 hoickt my feet wi' a flop fro'
 the claäy.
 Äy, stick oop thy back, an' set oop
 thy taäil, tha may gie me a kiss,
 Fur I walk'd wi' tha all the way hoam
 an' wur niver sa nigh saäyin'
 Yis.
 But wa boäth was i' sich a clat we was
 shaämed to cross Gigglesby
 Greäan,
 Fur a cat may looök at a king thou
 knaws but the cat mun be cleän.
 Sa we boäth on us kep out o' sight o'
 the winders o' Gigglesby
 Hinn—

Naäy, but the claws o' tha! quiet!
they pricks cleän thruf to the
skin—

An' wa boäth slinkt 'oäm by the
brokken shed i' the laäne at the
back,

Wheer the poodle runn'd at tha once,
an' thou runn'd oop o' the
thack;

An' tha squeedg'd my 'and i' the shed,
fur theree we was forced to 'ide,

Fur I seed that Steevie wur coomin',
and one o' the Tommies beside.

VII.

Theere now, what art'a mewin at,
Steevie? for owt I can tell—

Robby wur fust to be sewer, or I mowt
'a liked tha as well.

VIII.

But, Robby, I thowt o' tha all the
while I wur chaängin' my gown,
An' I thowt shall I chaänge my
staäte? but, O Lord, upo'
coomin' down—

My bran-new carpet es fresh es a
midder o' flowers i' Maäy—

Why 'edn't tha wiped thy shoes? it
wur clatted all ower wi' claäy.

An' I could a' cried ammost, fur I
seed that it couldn't be,

An' Robby I gied tha a raätin that
sattled thy coortin o' me.

An' Molly an' me was agreed, as we
was a-cleänin' the floor,

That a man be a durty thing an' a
trouble an' plague wi' indoor.

But I rued it arter a bit, fur I stuck
to tha moor na the rest,

But I couldn't 'a lived wi' a man an' I
knaws it be all fur the best.

IX.

Naäy—let ma stroäk tha down till I
maäkes tha es smooth es silk,

But if I 'ed married tha, Robby, thou'd
not 'a been worth thy milk,

Thou'd niver 'a cotch'd ony mice but
'a left me the work to do,

And 'a taäen to the bottle beside, so
es all that I 'ears be true;
But I loovs tha to maäke thysen 'appy,
an' soa purr awaäy, my dear,
Thou'ed wellnigh purr'd ma awaäy fro'
my oän two 'oonderd a-year.

X.

Sweärin agean, you Toms, as ye used
to do twelve year sin'!

Ye niver 'eärd Steevie sweär 'cep' it
wur at a dog coomin' in,

An' boath o' ye mun be fools to be
hallus a-shawin' your claws,

Fur I niver cared nothink for neither—
an' one o' ye deäd ye knaws!

Coom give hoäver then, weant ye? I
warrant ye soom fine daäy—

Theere, lig down—I shall hev to gie
one or tother awaäy.

Can't ye taäke pattern by Steevie? ye
shant hev a drop fro' the paäil.

Steevie be right good manners bang
thruf to the tip o' the taäil.

XI.

Robby, git down wi'tha, wilt tha? let
Steevie coom oop o' my knee.

Steevie, my lad, thou 'ed very nigh
been the Steevie fur me!

Robby wur fust to be sewer, 'e wur
burn an' bred i' the 'ouse,

But thou be es 'ansom a tabby es iver
patted a mouse.

XII.

An' I beänt not vaäin, but I knaws I
'ed led tha a quieter life

Nor her wi' the hepitaph yonder!
"A faäithful an' loovin' wife!"

An' 'cos o' thy farm by the beck, an'
thy windmill oop o' the croft,

Tha thowt tha would marry ma, did
tha? but that wur a bit ower

soft,
Thaw thou was es soäber es daäy, wi'
a niced red faäce, an' es cleän

Es a shillin' fresh fro' the mint wi' a
bran-new 'eäd o' the Queeän,

An' thy farmin' es cleän es thysen',
fur, Steevie, tha kep' it sa neät



"ALL AMONG THE MEADOWS."—Page 108

That I niver not spied sa much es a
poppy along wi' the wheät,
An' the wool of a thistle a-flyin' an'
seeädin' tha haätet to see;
'Twur es bad es a battle-twig¹ 'ere i'
my oän blue chaumber to me.
Ay, roob thy whiskers ageän ma, fur
I could 'a taäen to tha well,
But fur thy bairns, poor Steevie, a
bouncin' boy an' a gell.

XIII.

An' thou was es fond o' thy bairns es
I be mysen o' my cats,
But I niver not wish'd fur childer, I
hevn't naw likin' fur brats;
Pretty anew when ya dresses 'em oop,
an' they goäs fur a walk,
Or sits wi' their 'ands afoor 'em, an'
doesn't not 'inder the talk!
But their bottles o' pap, an' their
mucky bibs, an' the clats an'
the clouts,
An' their mashin' their toys to pieäces
an' maäkin' ma deäf wi' their
shouts,
An' hallus a-joompin' about ma as if
they was set upo' springs,
An' a haxin' ma hawkard questions,
an' saäyin' ondecet things,
An' a-callin' ma 'hugly' mayhap to
my faäce, or a teärin' my
gown—
Dear! dear! dear! I mun part them
Tommies—Steevie git down.

XIV.

Ye be wuss nor the men-tommies,
you. I tell'd ya, na moor o'
that!
Tom, lig theree o' the cushion, an'
tother Tom 'ere o' the mat.

XV.

Theere! I ha' master'd *them*! Hed
I married the Tommies—O
Lord,
To loove an' obaäy the Tommies! I
couldn't 'a stuck by my word.

¹ Earwig.

To be horder'd about, an' waäked,
when Molly 'd put out the
light,

By a man coomin' in wi' a hiccup at
ony hour o' the night!

An' the taäble staän'd wi' 'is aäle, an'
the mud o' 'is boots o' the stairs,
An' the stink o' 'is pipe i' the 'ouse,
an' the mark o' 'is 'eäd o' the
chairs!

An' noän o' my four sweet-arts 'ud 'a
let me 'a hed my oän waäy,
Sa I likes 'em best wi' taäils when
they 'evn't a word to saäy.

XVI.

An' I sits i' my oän little parlor, an'
sarved by my oän little lass,
Wi' my oän little garden outside, an'
my oän bed o' sparrow-grass,
An' my oän door poorch wi' the wood-
bine an' jessmine a-dressin' it
greeän,
An' my oän fine Jackman i' purple a
roäbin' the 'ouse like a Queeän.

XVII.

An' the little gells bobs to ma hoffens
es I be abroad i' the laänes,
When I goäs fur to coomfut the poor
es be down wi' their haäches
an' their paäins:
An' a haäf-pot o' jam, or a mossel o'
mcät when it beänt too dear,
They maäkes ma a graäter Laädy nor
'er 'i the mansion theer,
Hes 'es hallust o hax of a man how
much to spare or to spend;
An' a spinster I be an' I will be, if
soä please God, to the hend.

XVIII.

Mew! mew!—Bess wi' the milk!
what ha maäde our Molly sa
laäte?
It should 'a been 'ere by seven, an'
theere—it be strikin' height—
'Cushie wur craäzed fur 'er cauf' well
—I 'eärd 'er a maäkiu' 'er
moän,

An' I thowt to mysen 'thank God
that I hevn't naw cauf o' my
oän.'

Thereer!

Set it down!

Now Robby!
You Tommies shall waait to-
night
'Till Robby an' Steevie 'es 'ed their
lap—an' it sarves ye right.

LOCKSLEY HALL

SIXTY YEARS AFTER.

LATE, my grandson! half the morning have I paced these sandy tracts,
Watch'd again the hollow ridges roaring into cataracts,

Wander'd back to living boyhood while I heard the curlews call,
I myself so close on death, and death itself in Locksley Hall.

So—your happy suit was blasted—she the faultless, the divine;
And you liken—boyish babble—this boy-love of yours with mine.

I myself have often babbled doubtless of a foolish past;
Babble, babble; our old England may go down in babble at last.

'Curse him!' curse your fellow-victim? call him dotard in your rage?
Eyes that lured a doting boyhood well might fool a dotard's age.

Jilted for a wealthier! wealthier? yet perhaps she was not wise;
I remember how you kiss'd the miniature with those sweet eyes.

In the hall there hangs a painting—Amy's arms about my neck—
Happy children in a sunbeam sitting on the ribs of wreck.

In my life there was a picture, she that clasp'd my neck had flown;
I was left within the shadow sitting on the wreck alone.

Yours has been a slighter ailment, will you sicken for her sake?
You, not you! your modern amourist is of easier, earthlier make.

Amy loved me, Amy fail'd me, Amy was a timid child;
But your Judith—but your worldling—*she* had never driven me wild.

She that holds the diamond necklace dearer than the golden ring,
She that finds a winter sunset fairer than a morn of Spring.

She that in her heart is brooding on his briefer lease of life,
While she vows 'till death shall part us,' she the would-be-widow wife.

She the worldling born of worldlings—father, mother—be content,
Ev'n the homely farm can teach us there is something in descent.

Yonder in that chapel, slowly sinking now into the ground,
Lies the warrior, my forefather, with his feet upon the hound.

Cross'd! for once he sail'd the sea to crush the Moslem in his pride;
Dead the warrior, dead his glory, dead the cause in which he died.

Yet how often I and Amy in the mouldering aisle have stood,
Gazing for one pensive moment on that founder of our blood.

There again I stood to-day, and where of old we knelt in prayer,
Close beneath the casement crimson with the shield of Locksley—there,

All in white Italian marble, looking still as if she smiled,
Lies my Amy dead in child-birth, dead the mother, dead the child.

Dead—and sixty years ago, and dead her aged husband now—
I this old white-headed dreamer stoop and kiss'd her marble brow.

Gone the fires of youth, the follies, furies, curses, passionate tears,
Gone like fires and floods and earthquakes of the planet's dawning years.

Fires that shook me once, but now to silent ashes fall'n away.
Cold upon the dead volcano sleeps the gleam of dying day.

Gone the tyrant of my youth, and mute below the chancel stones,
All his virtues—I forgive them—black in white above his bones.

Gone the comrades of my bivouac, some in fight against the foe,
Some thro' age and slow diseases, gone as all on earth will go.

Gone with whom for forty years my life in golden sequence ran,
She with all the charm of woman, she with all the breadth of man,

Strong in will and rich in wisdom, Edith, yet so lowly-sweet,
Woman to her inmost heart, and woman to her tender feet,

Very woman of very woman, nurse of ailing body and mind,
She that link'd again the broken chain that bound me to my kind.

Here to-day was Amy with me, while I wander'd down the coast,
Near us Edith's holy shadow, smiling at the slighter ghost.

Gone our sailor son thy father, Leonard early lost at sea;
Thou alone, my boy, of Amy's kin and mine art left to me.

Gone thy tender-natured mother, wearying to be left alone,
Pining for the stronger heart that once had beat beside her own.

Truth, for Truth is Truth, he worshipt, being true as he was brave;
Good, for Good is Good, he follow'd, yet he look'd beyond the grave,

Wiser there than you, that crowning barren Death as lord of all,
Deem this over-tragic drama's closing curtain is the pall!

Beautiful was death in him, who saw the death, but kept the deck,
Saving women and their babes, and sinking with the sinking wreck,

Gone for ever! Ever? no—for since our dying race began,
Ever, ever, and for ever was the leading light of man.

Those that in barbarian burials kill'd the slave, and slew the wife
Felt within themselves the sacred-passion of the second life.

Indian warriors dream of ampler hunting grounds beyond the night;
Ev'n the black Australian dying hopes he shall return, a white.

Truth for truth, and good for good! The Good, the True, the Pure, the Just—
Take the charm 'For ever' from them, and they crumble into dust.

Gone the cry of 'Forward, Forward,' lost within a growing gloom;
Lost, or only heard in silence from the silence of a tomb.

Half the marvels of my morning, triumphs over time and space,
Staled by frequency, shrunk by usage into commonest commonplace!

'Forward' rang the voices then, and of the many mine was one.
Let us hush this cry of 'Forward' till ten thousand years have gone.

Far among the vanish'd races, old Assyrian kings would flay
Captives whom they caught in battle—iron-hearted victors they.

Agès after, while in Asia, he that led the wild Moguls,
Timur built his ghastly tower of eighty thousand human skulls,

Then, and here in Edward's time, an age of noblest English names,
Christain conquerors took and flung the conquer'd Christian into flames.

Love your enemy, bless your haters, said the Greatest of the great;
Christian love among the Churches look'd the twin of heathen hate.

From the golden alms of Blessing man had coin'd himself a curse:
Rome of Cæsar, Rome of Peter, which was crueller? which was worse?

France had shown a light to all men, preach'd a Gospel, all men's good;
Celtic Demos rose a Demon, shriek'd and slaked the light with blood.

Hope was ever on her mountain, watching till the day begun—
Crown'd with sunlight—over darkness—from the still unrisen sun.

Have we grown at last beyond the passions of the primal clan?
'Kill your enemy, for you hate him,' still, 'your enemy' was a man.

Have we sunk below them? peasants maim the helpless horse, and drive
Innocent cattle under thatch, and burn the kindlier brutes alive.

Brutes, the brutes are not your wrongers—burnt at midnight, found at morn,
Twisted hard in mortal agony with their offspring, born-unborn,

Clinging to the silent mother! Are we devils? are we men?
Sweet St. Francis of Assisi, would that he were here again,

He that in his Catholic wholeness used to call the very flowers
Sisters, brothers—and the beasts—whose pains are hardly less than ours!

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! who can tell how all will end?
Read the wide world's annals, you, and take their wisdom for your friend.

Hope the best, but hold the Present fatal daughter of the Past,
Shape your heart to front the hour, but dream not that the hour will last.

Ay, if dynamite and revolver leave you courage to be wise:
When was age so cramm'd with menace? madness? written, spoken lies?

Envy wears the mask of Love, and, laughing sober fact to scorn,
Cries to Weakest as to Strongest, 'Ye are equals, equal-born.'

Equal-born? O yes, if yonder hill be level with the flat.
Charm us, Orator, till the Lion look no larger than the Cat,

Till the Cat thro' that mirage of overheated language loom
Larger than the Lion,—Demos end in working its own doom.

Russia bursts our Indian barrier, shall we fight her? shall we yield?
Pause! before you sound the trumpet, hear the voices from the field.

Those three hundred millions under one Imperial sceptre now,
Shall we hold them? shall we loose them? take the suffrage of the plow.

Nay, but these would feel and follow Truth if only you and you,
Rivals of realm-ruining party, when you speak were wholly true.

Plowmen, Shepherds, have I found, and more than once, and still could find,
Sons of God, and kings of men in utter nobleness of mind,

Truthful, trustful, looking upward to the practised hustings-liar;
So the Higher wields the Lower, while the Lower is the Higher.

Here and there a cotter's babe is royal-born by right divine;
Here and there my lord is lower than his oxen or his swine.

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! once again the sickening game;
Freedom, free to slay herself, and dying while they shout her name.

Step by step we gain'd a freedom known to Europe, known to all;
Step by step we rose to greatness,—thro' the tonguesters we may fall.

You that woo the Voices—tell them 'old experience is a fool,'
Teach your flatter'd kings that only those who cannot read can rule.

Pluck the mighty from their seat, but set no meek ones in their place;
Pillory Wisdom in your markets, pelt your offal at her face.

Tumble Nature heel o'er head, and, yelling with the yelling street,
Set the feet above the brain and swear the brain is in the feet.

Bring the old dark ages back without the faith, without the hope,
Break the State, the Church, the Throne, and roll their ruins down the slope.

Authors—essayist, atheist, novelist, realist, rhymester, play your part,
Paint the mortal shame of nature with the living hues of Art.

Rip your brothers' vices open, strip your own foul passions bare; [stare.
Down with Reticence, down with Reverence—forward—naked—let them

Feed the budding rose of boyhood with the drainage of your sewer;
Send the drain into the fountain, lest the stream should issue pure.

Set the maiden fancies wallowing in the troughs of Zolaism,—
Forward, forward, ay and backward, downward too into the abysm.

Do your best to charm the worst, to lower the rising race of men;
Have we risen from out the beast, then back into the beast again?

Only 'dust to dust' for me that sicken at your lawless din,
Dust in wholesome old-world dust before the newer world begin.

Heated am I? you—you wonder—well, it scarce becomes mine age—
Patience! let the dying actor mouth his last upon the stage.

Cries of unprogressive dotage ere the dotard fall asleep?
Noises of a current narrowing, not the music of a deep?

Ay, for doubtless I am old, and think gray thoughts, for I am gray:
After all the stormy changes shall we find a changeless May?

After madness, after massacre, Jacobinism and Jacquerie,
Some diviner force to guide us thro' the days I shall not see?

When the schemes and all the systems, Kingdoms and Republics fall,
Something kindlier, higher, holier—all for each and each for all?

All the full-brain, half-brain races, led by Justice, Love, and Truth;
All the millions one at length with all the visions of my youth?

All diseases quench'd by Science, no man halt, or deaf or blind;
Stronger ever born of weaker, lustier body, larger mind?

Earth at last a warless world, a single race, a single tongue—
I have seen her far away—for is not Earth as yet so young?—

Every tiger madness muzzled, every serpent passion kill'd,
Every grim ravine a garden, every blazing desert till'd,

Robed in universal harvest up to either pole she smiles,
Universal ocean softly washing all her warless Isles.

Warless? when her tens are thousands, and her thousands millions, then—
All her harvest all too narrow—who can fancy warless men?

Warless? war will die out late then. Will it ever? late or soon?
Can it, till this outworn earth be dead as yon dead world the moon?

Dead the new astronomy calls her. . . . On this day and at this hour,
In this gap between the sandhills, whence you see the Locksley tower,

Here we met, our latest meeting—Amy—sixty years ago—
She and I—the moon was falling greenish thro' a rosy glow,

Just above the gateway tower, and even where you see her now—
Here we stood and claspt each other, swore the seeming-deathless vow. . .

Dead, but how her living glory lights the hall, the dune, the grass!
Yet the moonlight is the sunlight, and the sun himself will pass.

Venus near her! smiling downward at this earthlier earth of ours,
Closer on the Sun, perhaps a world of never fading flowers.

Hesper, whom the poet call'd the Bringer home of all good things.
All good things may move in Hesper, perfect peoples, perfect kings.

Hesper—Venus—were we native to that splendor or in Mars,
We should see the Globe we groan in, fairest of their evening stars.

Could we dream of wars and carnage, craft and madness, lust and spite,
Roaring London, raving Paris, in that point of peaceful light?

Might we not in glancing heavenward on a star so silver-fair,
Yearn, and clasp the hands and murmur, 'Would to God that we were there'?

Forward, backward, backward, forward, in the immeasurable sea,
Sway'd by vaster ebbs and flows than can be known to you or me.

All the suns—are these but symbols of innumerable man,
Man or Mind that sees a shadow of the planner or the plan?

Is there evil but on earth? or pain in every peopled sphere?
Well be grateful for the sounding watchword 'Evolution' here,

Evolution ever climbing after some ideal good,
And Reversion ever dragging Evolution in the mud.

What are men that He should heed us? cried the king of sacred song;
Insects of an hour, that hourly work their brother insect wrong,

While the silent Heavens roll, and Suns along their fiery way,
All their planets whirling round them, flash a million miles a day.

Many an Æon moulded earth before her highest, man, was born,
Many an Æon too may pass when earth is manless and forlorn,

Earth so huge, and yet so bounded—pools of salt, and plots of land—
Shallow skin of green and azure—chains of mountain, grains of sand!

Only That which made us, meant us to be mightier by and by,
Set the sphere of all the boundless Heavens within the human eye,

Sent the shadow of Himself, the boundless, thro' the human soul;
Boundless inward, in the atom, boundless outward, in the Whole.

* * * * *

Here is Locksley Hall, my grandson, here the lion-guarded gate.
Not to-night in Locksley Hall—to-morrow—you, you come so late.

Wreck'd—your train—or all but wreck'd? a shatter'd wheel? a vicious boy!
Good, this forward, you that preach it, is it well to wish you joy?

Is it well that while we range with Science, glorying in the Time,
City children soak and blacken soul and sense in city slime?

There among the glooming alleys Progress halts on palsied feet,
Crime and hunger cast our maidens by the thousand on the street.

There the Master scrimps his haggard sempstress of her daily bread,
There a single sordid attic holds the living and the dead.

There the smouldering fire of fever creeps across the rotted floor,
And the crowded couch of incest in the warrens of the poor.

Nay, your pardon, cry your 'forward,' yours are hope and youth, but I—
Eighty winters leave the dog too lame to follow with the cry,

Lame and old, and past his time, and passing now into the night;
Yet I would the rising race were half as eager for the light.

Light the fading gleam of Even? light the glimmer of the dawn?
Aged eyes may take the growing glimmer for the gleam withdrawn.

Far away beyond her myriad coming changes earth will be
Something other than the wildest modern guess of you and me.

Earth may reach her earthly-worst, or if she gain her earthly-best,
Would she find her human offspring this ideal man at rest?

Forward then, but still remember how the course of Time will swerve,
Crook and turn upon itself in many a backward streaming curve.

Not the Hall to-night, my grandson! Death and Silence hold their own.
Leave the Master in the first dark hour of his last sleep alone.

Worthier soul was he than I am, sound and honest, rustic Squire,
Kindly landlord, boon companion—youthful jealousy is a liar.

Cast the poison from your bosom, oust the madness from your brain.
Let the trampled servant show you that you have not lived in vain.

Youthful ! youth and age are scholars yet but in the lower school,
Nor is he the wisest man who never proved himself a fool.

Yonder lies our young sea-village—Art and Grace are less and less :
Science grows and Beauty dwindles—roofs of slated hideousness !

There is one old Hostel left us where they swing the Locksley shield,
Till the peasant cow shall butt the ' Lion passant ' from his field.

Poor old Heraldry, poor old History, poor old Poetry, passing hence,
In the common deluge drowning old political common-sense !

Poor old voice of eighty crying after voices that have fled !
All I loved are vanish'd voices, all my steps are on the dead.

All the world is ghost to me, and as the phantom disappears,
Forward far and far from here is all the hope of eighty years.

* * * * *

In this Hostel—I remember—I repent it o'er his grave—
Like a clown—by chance he met me—I refused the hand he gave.

From that casement where the trailer mantles all the mouldering bricks—
I was then in early boyhood, Edith but a child of six—

While I shelter'd in this archway from a day of driving showers—
Pept the winsome face of Edith like a flower among the flowers.

Here to-night ! the Hall to-morrow, when they toll the Chapel bell !
Shall I hear in one dark room a wailing, ' I have loved thee well.'

Then a peal that shakes the portal—one has come to claim his bride,
Her that shrank, and put me from her, shriek'd, and started from my side—

Silent echoes ! You, my Leonard, use and not abuse your day,
Move among your people, know them, follow him who led the way,

Strove for sixty widow'd years to help his homelier brother men,
Served the poor, and built the cottage, raised the school, and drain'd the fen.

Hears he now the Voice that wrong'd him ? who shall swear it cannot be ?
Earth would never touch her worst, were one in fifty such as he.

Ere she gain her Heavenly-best, a God must mingle with the game :
Nay, there may be those about us whom we neither see nor name,

Felt within us as ourselves, the Powers of Good, the Powers of Ill,
Strowing balm, or shedding poison in the fountains of the Will.

Follow you the Star that lights a desert pathway, yours or mine.
Forward, till you see the highest Human Nature is divine.

Follow Light, and do the Right—for man can half-control his doom—
Till you find the deathless Angel seated in the vacant tomb.

Forward, let the stormy moment fly and mingle with the Past.
I that loathed, have come to love him. Love will conquer at the last.

Gone at eighty, mine own age, and I and you will bear the pall;
Then I leave thee Lord and Master, latest Lord of Locksley Hall.

PROLOGUE

TO GENERAL HAMLEY.

OUR birches yellowing and from each
The light leaf falling fast,
While squirrels from our fiery beech
Were bearing off the mast,
You came, and look'd and loved the
view

Long-known and loved by me,
Green Sussex fading into blue
With one gray glimpse of sea;
And, gazing from this height alone,
We spoke of what had been
Most marvellous in the wars your own
Crimean eyes had seen;
And now—like old-world inns that
take

Some warrior for a sign
That therewithin a guest may make
True cheer with honest wine—
Because you heard the lines I read
Nor utter'd word of blame,
I dare without your leave to head
These rhymings with your name,
Who know you but as one of those
I fain would meet again,
Yet know you, as your England knows
That you and all your men
Were soldiers to her heart's desire,
When, in the vanish'd year,
You saw the league-long rampart-fire
Flare from Tel-el-Kebir
Thro' darkness, and the foe was driven,
And Wolseley overthrew
Arâbi, and the stars in heaven
Paled, and the glory grew.

THE CHARGE OF THE HEAVY BRIGADE AT BALACLAVA.

OCTOBER 25, 1854.

I.

THE charge of the gallant three hun-
dred, the Heavy Brigade!
Down the hill, down the hill, thousands
of Russians,
Thousands of horsemen, drew to the
valley—and stay'd;
For Scarlett and Scarlett's three hun-
dred were riding by
When the points of the Russian lances
arose in the sky;
And he call'd 'Left wheel into line!'
and they wheel'd and obey'd.
Then he look'd at the host that had
halted he knew not why,
And he turn'd half round, and he bad
his trumpeter sound
To the charge, and he rode on ahead,
as he waved his blade
To the gallant three hundred whose
glory will never die—
'Follow,' and up the hill, up the hill,
up the hill,
Follow'd the Heavy Brigade.

II.

The trumpet, the gallop, the charge,
and the might of the fight!
Thousands of horsemen had gather'd
there on the height,
With a wing push'd out to the left
and a wing to the right,

And who shall escape if they close?
 but he dash'd up alone
 Thro' the great gray slope of men,
 Sway'd his sabre, and held his own
 Like an Englishman there and then;
 All in a moment follow'd with force
 Three that were next in their fiery
 course,
 Wedged themselves in between horse
 and horse,
 Fought for their lives in the narrow
 gap they had made—
 Four amid thousands! and up the
 hill, up the hill,
 Gallopt the gallant three hundred, the
 Heavy Brigade.

III.

Fell like a cannonshot,
 Burst like a thunderbolt,
 Crash'd like a hurricane,
 Broke thro' the mass from below,
 Drove thro' the midst of the foe,
 Plunged up and down, to and fro,
 Rode flashing blow upon blow,
 Brave Inniskillens and Greys
 Whirling their sabres in circles of
 light!

And some of us, all in amaze,
 Who were held for a while from the
 fight,

And were only standing at gaze,
 When the dark-muffled Russian
 crowd

Folded its wings from the left and
 the right,

And roll'd them around like a
 cloud,—

O mad for the charge and the battle
 were we,

When our own good redcoats sank
 from sight,

Like drops of blood in a dark-gray
 sea,

And we turn'd to each other, whisper-
 ing, all dismay'd,

'Lost are the gallant three hundred of
 Scarlett's Brigade!'

IV.

'Lost one and all' were the words
 Mutter'd in our dismay;

But they rode like Victors and Lords
 Thro' the forest of lances and swords
 In the heart of the Russian hordes,
 They rode, or they stood at bay—
 Struck with the sword-hand and slew,
 Down with the bridle-hand drew
 The foe from the saddle and threw
 Underfoot there in the fray—
 Ranged like a storm or stood like a
 rock—

In the wave of a stormy day;
 Till suddenly shock upon shock
 Stagger'd the mass from without,
 Drove it in wild disarray,
 For our men gallopt up with a cheer
 and a shout,

And the foeman surged, and waver'd,
 and reel'd

Up the hill, up the hill, up the hill,
 out of the field,

And over the brow and away.

V.

Glory to each and to all, and the
 charge that they made!

Glory to all the three hundred, and
 all the Brigade!

NOTE.—The 'three hundred' of the
 'Heavy Brigade' who made this famous
 charge were the Scots Greys and the 2nd
 squadron of Inniskillings; the remainder
 of the 'Heavy Brigade' subsequently
 dashing up to their support.

The 'three' were Scarlett's aid-de-camp,
 Elliot, and the trumpeter and Shegog the
 orderly, who had been close behind him.

EPILOGUE.

IRENE.

NOT this way will you set your name
 A star among the stars.

POET.

What way?

IRENE.

You praise when you should
 blame

The barbarism of wars.
A juster epoch has begun.

POET.

Yet tho' this cheek be gray,
And that bright hair the modern sun,
Those eyes the blue to-day,
You wrong me, passionate little friend.
I would that wars should cease,
I would the globe from end to end
Might sow and reap in peace,
And some new Spirit o'erbear the old,
Or Trade re-frain the Powers
From war with kindly links of gold,
Or Love with wreaths of flowers.
Slav, Teuton, Kelt, I count them all
My friends and brother souls,
With all the peoples, great and small,
That wheel between the poles.
But since, our mortal shadow, Ill
To waste this earth began—
Perchance from some abuse of Will
In worlds before the man
Involving ours—he needs must fight
To make true peace his own,
He needs must combat might with
might,
Or Might would rule alone;
And who loves War for War's own
sake
Is fool, or crazed, or worse;
But let the patriot-soldier take
His meed of fame in verse;
Nay—tho' that realm were in the
wrong
For which her warriors bleed,
It still were right to crown with song
The warrior's noble deed—
A crown the Singer hopes may last,
For so the deed endures;
But Song will vanish in the Vast;
And that large phrase of yours
'A Star among the stars,' my dear,
Is girlish talk at best;
For dare we dally with the sphere
As he did half in jest,
Old Horace? 'I will strike' said he
'The stars with head sublime,'
But scarce could see, as now we see,
The man in Space and Time,
So drew perchance a happier lot
Than ours, who rhyme to-day.

The fires that arch this dusky dot—
Yon myriad-worlded way—
The vast sun-clusters' gather'd blaze,
World-isles in lonely skies,
Whole heavens within themselves,
amaze
Our brief humanities;
And so does Earth; for Homer's
fame,
Tho' carved in harder stone—
The falling drop will make his name
As mortal as my own.

IRENE.

No!

POET.

Let it live then—ay, till when?
Earth passes, all is lost
In what they prophesy, our wise men,
Sun-flame or sunless frost,
And deed and song alike are swept
Away, and all in vain
As far as man can see, except
The man himself remain;
And tho', in this lean age forlorn,
Too many a voice may cry
That man can have no after-morn,
Not yet of these am I.
The man remains, and whatsoever
He wrought of good or brave
Will mould him thro' the cycle-year
That dawns behind the grave.

And here the Singer for his Art
Not all in vain may plead
'The song that nerves a nation's
heart,
Is in itself a deed.'

TO VIRGIL.

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF THE
MANTUANS FOR THE NINETEENTH
CENTENARY OF VIRGIL'S DEATH.

I.

ROMAN VIRGIL, thou that singest
Ilion's lofty temples robed in
fire,

Ilion falling, Rome arising,
wars, and filial faith, and Dido's
pyre ;

II.

Landscape-lover, lord of language
more than he that sang the
Works and Days,
All the chosen coin of fancy
flashing out from many a golden
phrase ;

III.

Thou that singest wheat and woodland,
tilth and vineyard, hive and
horse and herd ;
All the charm of all the Muses
often flowering in a lonely word ;

IV.

Poet of the happy Tityrus
piping underneath his beechen
bowers ;
Poet of the poet-satyr
whom the laughing shepherd
bound with flowers ;

V.

Chanter of the Pollio, glorying
in the blissful years again to be,
Summers of the snakeless meadow,
unlaborious earth and oarless
sea ;

VI.

Thou that seest Universal
Nature moved by Universal
Mind ;
Thou majestic in thy sadness
at the doubtful doom of human
kind ;

VII.

Light among the vanish'd ages ;
star that gildest yet this phan-
tom shore ;
Golden branch amid the shadows,
kings and realms that pass to
rise no more ;

VIII.

Now thy Forum roars no longer,
fallen every purple Cæsar's
dome—
Tho' thine ocean-roll of rhythm
sound for ever of Imperial
Rome—

IX.

Now the Rome of slaves hath perish'd,
and the Rome of freemen holds
her place,
I, from out the Northern Island
sunder'd once from all the
human race,

X.

I salute thee, Mantovano,
I that loved thee since my day
began,
Wielder of the stateliest measure
ever moulded by the lips of
man.

THE DEAD PROPHET.

182—.

I.

DEAD !
And the Muses cried with a stormy
cry
' Send them no more, for evermore.
Let the people die.'

II.

Dead !
' Is it *he* then brought so low ?'
And a careless people flock'd from
the fields
With a purse to pay for the show.

III.

Dead, who had served his time,
Was one of the people's kings,
Had labor'd in lifting them out of
slime,
And showing them, souls have
wings !

IV.

Dumb on the winter heath he lay.
His friends had stript him bare,
And roll'd his nakedness everyway
That all the crowd might stare.

V.

A storm-worn signpost not to be read,
And a tree with a moulder'd nest
On its barkless bones, stood stark by
the dead;
And behind him, low in the West,

VI.

With shifting ladders of shadow and
light,
And blurr'd in color and form,
The sun hung over the gates of Night,
And glared at a coming storm.

VII.

Then glided a vulturous Beldam
forth,
That on dumb death had thriven;
They call'd her 'Reverence' here
upon earth,
And 'The Curse of the Prophet' in
Heaven.

VIII.

She knelt—'We worship him'—all
but wept—
'So great so noble was he!'
She clear'd her sight, she arose, she
swept
The dust of earth from her knee.

IX.

'Great! for he spoke and the people
heard,
And his eloquence caught like a
flame
From zone to zone of the world, till
his Word
Had won him a noble name.

X.

Noble! he sung, and the sweet sound
ran

Thro' palace and cottage door,
For he touch'd on the whole sad
planet of man,
The kings and the rich and the
poor;

XI.

And he sung not alone of an old sun
set,
But a sun coming up in his youth!
Great and noble—O yes—but yet—
For man is a lover of Truth,

XII.

And bound to follow, wherever she go
Stark-naked, and up or down,
Thro' her high hill-passes of stainless
snow,
Or the foulest sewer of the town—

XIII.

Noble and great—O ay—but then,
Tho' a prophet should have his due,
Was he noblier-fashion'd than other
men?
Shall we see to it, I and you?

XIV.

For since he would sit on a Prophet's
seat,
As a lord of the Human soul,
We needs must scan him from head
to feet
Were it but for a wart or a mole?'

XV.

His wife and his child stood by him in
tears,
But she—she push'd them aside.
'Tho' a name may last for a thousand
years,
Yet a truth is a truth,' she cried.

XVI.

And she that had haunted his pathway
still,
Had often truckled and cower'd
When he rose in his wrath, and had
yielded her will
To the master, as overpower'd,

XVII.

She tumbled his helpless corpse about.
 'Small blemish upon the skin!
 But I think we know what is fair
 without
 Is often as foul within.'

XVIII.

She crouch'd, she tore him part from
 part,
 And out of his body she drew
 The red 'Blood-eagle'¹ of liver and
 heart;
 She held them up to the view;

XIX.

She gabbled, as she groped in the
 dead,
 And all the people were pleased;
 'See, what a little heart,' she said,
 'And the liver is half-diseased!'

XX.

She tore the Prophet after death,
 And the people paid her well.
 Lightnings flicker'd along the heath;
 One shriek'd 'The fires of Hell!'

EARLY SPRING.

I.

ONCE more the Heavenly Power
 Makes all things new,
 And domes the red-plow'd hills
 With loving blue;
 The blackbirds have their wills,
 The throistles too.

II.

Opens a door in Heaven;
 From skies of glass
 A Jacob's ladder falls
 On greening grass,

¹ Old Viking term for lungs, liver, etc.,
 when torn by the conqueror out of the body
 of the conquered.

And o'er the mountain-walls
 Young angels pass.

III.

Before them fleets the shower,
 And burst the buds,
 And shine the level lands,
 And flash the floods;
 The stars are from their hands
 Flung thro' the woods,

IV.

The woods with living airs
 How softly fann'd,
 Light airs from where the deep,
 All down the sand,
 Is breathing in his sleep,
 Heard by the land.

V.

O follow, leaping blood,
 The season's lure!
 O heart, look down and up
 Serene, secure,
 Warm as the crocus cup,
 Like snowdrops, pure!

VI.

Past, Future glimpse and fade
 Thro' some slight spell,
 A gleam from yonder vale,
 Some far blue fell,
 And sympathies, how frail,
 In sound and smell!

VII.

Till at thy chuckled note,
 Thou twinkling bird,
 The fairy fancies range,
 And, lightly stirr'd,
 Ring little bells of change
 From word to word.

VIII.

For now the Heavenly Power
 Makes all things new,
 And thaws the cold, and fills
 The flower with dew;
 The blackbirds have their walls,
 The poets too.

PREFATORY POEM TO MY
BROTHER'S SONNETS.

Midnight, June 30, 1879.

I.

MIDNIGHT—in no midsummer tune
The breakers lash the shores :
The cuckoo of a joyless June
Is calling out of doors :

And thou hast vanish'd from thine own
To that which looks like rest,
True brother, only to be known
By those who love thee best.

II.

Midnight—and joyless June gone by,
And from the deluged park
The cuckoo of a worse July
Is calling thro' the dark :

But thou art silent underground,
And o'er thee streams the rain,
True poet, surely to be found
When Truth is found again.

III.

And, now to these unsummer'd skies
The summer bird is still,
Far off a phantom cuckoo cries
From out a phantom hill ;

And thro' this midnight breaks the sun
Of sixty years away,
The light of days when life begun,
The days that seem to-day,

When all my griefs were shared with
thee,
As all my hopes were thine—
As all thou wert was one with me,
May all thou art be mine !

'FRATER AVE ATQUE VALE.'

Row us out from Desenzano, to your
Sirmione row !
So they row'd, and there we landed—
'O venusta Sirmio !'

There to me thro' all the groves of
olive in the summer glow,
There beneath the Roman ruin where
the purple flowers grow,
Came that 'Ave atque Vale' of the
Poet's hopeless woe,
Tenderest of Roman poets nineteen-
hundred years ago,
'Frater Ave atque Vale'—as we wan-
der'd to and fro
Gazing at the Lydian laughter of the
Garda Lake below
Sweet Catullus's all-but-island, olive-
silvery Sirmio !

HELEN'S TOWER.¹

HELEN'S TOWER, here I stand,
Dominant over sea and land.
Son's love built me, and I hold
Mother's love in letter'd gold.
Love is in and out of time,
I am mortal stone and lime.
Would my granite girth were strong
As either love, to last as long !
I should wear my crown entire
To and thro' the Doomsday fire,
And be found of angel eyes
In earth's recurring Paradise.

EPITAPH ON LORD STRAT-
FORD DE REDCLIFFE.

IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

THOU third great Canning, stand
among our best
And noblest, now thy long day's
work hath ceased,
Here silent in our Minster of the
West
Who wert the voice of England in
the East.

¹ Written at the request of my friend, Lord
Dufferin.

EPITAPH
ON GENERAL GORDON.

IN THE GORDON BOYS' NATIONAL
MEMORIAL HOME NEAR WOKING.

WARRIOR of God, man's friend, and
tyrant's foe,
Now somewhere dead far in the
waste Soudan,
Thou livest in all hearts, for all men
know
This earth has never borne a nobler
man.

EPITAPH ON CAXTON.

IN ST. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER.

FIAT LUX (his motto).

THY prayer was 'Light—more Light—
while Time shall last!'
Thou sawest a glory growing on the
night,
But not the shadows which that light
would cast,
Till shadows vanish in the Light of
Light.

TO THE DUKE OF ARGYLL.

O PATRIOT Statesman, be thou wise to
know
The limits of resistance, and the
bounds
Determining concession; still be bold
Not only to slight praise but suffer
scorn;
And be thy heart a fortress to main-
tain
The day against the moment, and the
year
Against the day; thy voice, a music
heard
Thro' all the yells and counter-yells of
feud

And faction, and thy will, a power to
make
This ever-changing world of circum-
stance,
In changing, chime with never-chang-
ing Law.

HANDS ALL ROUND.

FIRST pledge our Queen this solemn
night,
Then drink to England, every guest;
That man's the best Cosmopolite
Who loves his native country best.
May freedom's oak for ever live
With stronger life from day to day;
That man's the true Conservative
Who lops the moulder'd branch
away.

Hands all round!

God the traitor's hope confound!
To this great cause of Freedom drink,
my friends,
And the great name of England,
round and round.

To all the loyal hearts who long
To keep our English Empire whole!
To all our noble sons, the strong
New England of the Southern Pole!
To England under Indian skies,
To those dark millions of her realm!
To Canada whom we love and prize,
Whatever statesman hold the helm.
Hands all round!

God the traitor's hope confound!
To this great name of England drink,
my friends,
And all her glorious empire, round
and round.

To all our statesmen so they be
True leaders of the land's desire!
To both our Houses, may they see
Beyond the borough and the shire!
We sail'd wherever ship could sail,
We founded many a mighty state;
Pray God our greatness may not fail
Thro' craven fears of being great.
Hands all round!

God the traitor's hope confound !
 To this great cause of Freedom drink,
 my friends,
 And the great name of England,
 round and round.

FREEDOM.

I.

O THOU so fair in summers gone,
 While yet thy fresh and virgin soul
 Inform'd the pillar'd Parthenon,
 The glittering Capitol ;

II.

So fair in southern sunshine bathed,
 But scarce of such majestic mien
 As here with forehead vapor-swathed
 In meadows ever green ;

III.

For thou—when Athens reign'd and
 Rome,
 Thy glorious eyes were dimm'd with
 pain
 To mark in many a freeman's home
 The slave, the scourge, the chain ;

IV.

O follower of the Vision, still
 In motion to the distant gleam,
 Howe'er blind force and brainless will
 May jar thy golden dream

V.

Of Knowledge fusing class with class,
 Of civic Hate no more to be,
 Of Love to leaven all the mass,
 Till every Soul be free ;

VI.

Who yet, like Nature, wouldst not mar
 By changes all too fierce and fast
 This order of Her Human Star,
 This heritage of the past ;

VII.

O scorner of the party cry
 That wanders from the public good,
 Thou—when the nations rear on high
 Their idol smear'd with blood,

VIII.

And when they roll their idol down—
 Of saner worship sanely proud ;
 Thou loather of the lawless crown
 As of the lawless crowd ;

IX.

How long thine ever-growing mind
 Hath still'd the blast and strown
 the wave,
 Tho' some of late would raise a wind
 To sing thee to thy grave,

X.

Men loud against all forms of power—
 Unfurnish'd brows, tempestuous
 tongues—
 Expecting all things in an hour—
 Brass mouths and iron lungs !

TO H. R. H. PRINCESS BEATRICE.

Two Suns of Love make day of human
 life,
 Which else with all its pains, and
 griefs, and deaths,
 Were utter darkness—one, the Sun of
 dawn
 That brightens thro' the Mother's ten-
 der eyes,
 And warms the child's awakening
 world—and one
 The later-rising Sun of spousal Love,
 Which from her household orbit draws
 the child
 To move in other spheres. The
 Mother weeps
 At that white funeral of the single life,
 Her maiden daughter's marriage ; and
 her tears
 Are half of pleasure, half of pain—the
 child

Is happy—ev'n in leaving *her!* but
 Thou,
 True daughter, whose all-faithful, filial
 eyes
 Have seen the loneliness of earthly
 thrones,
 Wilt neither quit the widow'd Crown,
 nor let
 This later light of Love have risen in
 vain,
 But moving thro' the Mother's home,
 between
 The two that love thee, lead a sum-
 mer life,
 Sway'd by each Love, and swaying to
 each Love,
 Like some conjectured planet in mid
 heaven
 Between two Suns, and drawing down
 from both
 The light and genial warmth of double
 day.

THE FLEET.¹

I.

You, you, *if* you shall fail to under-
 stand
 What England is, and what her all-
 in-all,
 On you will come the curse of all the
 land,
 Should this old England fall
 Which Nelson left so great.

1 The speaker said that 'he should like to be assured that other outlying portions of the Empire, the Crown colonies, and important coaling stations were being as promptly and as thoroughly fortified as the various capitals of the self-governing colonies. He was credibly informed this was not so. It was impossible, also, not to feel some degree of anxiety about the efficacy of present provision to defend and protect, by means of swift well-armed cruisers, the immense mercantile fleet of the Empire. A third source of anxiety, so far as the colonies were concerned, was the apparently insufficient provision for the rapid manufacture of armaments and their prompt

II.

His isle, the mightiest Ocean-power
 on earth,
 Our own fair isle, the lord of every
 sea—
 Her fuller franchise—what would that
 be worth—
 Her ancient fame of Free—
 Were she . . . a fallen state?

III.

Her dauntless army scatter'd, and so
 small,
 Her island-miads fed from alien
 lands—
 The fleet of England is her all-in-all;
 Her fleet is in your hands,
 And in her fleet her Fate.

despatch when ordered to their colonial destination. Hence the necessity for manufacturing appliances equal to the requirements, not of Great Britain alone, but of the whole Empire. But the keystone of the whole was the necessity for an overwhelmingly powerful fleet and efficient defence for all necessary coaling stations. This was as essential for the colonies as for Great Britain. It was the one condition for the continuance of the Empire. All that Continental Powers did with respect to armies England should effect with her navy. It was essentially a defensive force, and could be moved rapidly from point to point, but it should be equal to all that was expected from it. It was to strengthen the fleet that colonists would first readily tax themselves, because they realized how essential a powerful fleet was to the safety, not only of that extensive commerce sailing in every sea, but ultimately to the security of the distant portions of the Empire. Who could estimate the loss involved in even a brief period of disaster to the Imperial Navy? Any amount of money timely expended in preparation would be quite insignificant when compared with the possible calamity he had referred to.'—*Extract from Sir Graham Berry's Speech at the Colonial Institute, 9th November, 1886*

IV.

You, you, that have the ordering of
her fleet,
If you should only compass her dis-
grace,
When all men starve, the wild mob's
million feet
Will kick you from your place,
But then too late, too late.

OPENING OF THE INDIAN
AND COLONIAL EXHIBI-
TION BY THE QUEEN.

*Written at the Request of the Prince
of Wales.*

I.

WELCOME, welcome with one voice !
In your welfare we rejoice,
Sons and brothers that have sent,*
From isle and cape and continent,
Produce of your field and flood,
Mount and mine, and primal wood ;
Works of subtle brain and hand,
And splendors of the morning land,
Gifts from every British zone ;
Britons, hold your own !

II.

May we find, as ages run,
The mother featured in the son ;
And may yours for ever be
That old strength and constancy
Which has made your fathers great
In our ancient island State,
And wherever her flag fly,
Glorying between sea and sky,
Makes the might of Britain known ;
Britons, hold your own !

III.

Britain fought her sons of yore—
Britain fail'd ; and never more,
Careless of our growing kin,
Shall we sin our fathers' sin,
Men that in a narrower day—
Unprophetic rulers they—

Drove from out the mother's nest
That young eagle of the West
To forage for herself alone ;
Britons, hold your own !

IV.

Sharers of our glorious past,
Brothers, must we part at last ?
Shall we not thro' good and ill
Cleave to one another still ?
Britain's myriad voices call,
' Sons, be welded each and all,
Into one imperial whole,
One with Britain, heart and soul
One life, one flag, one fleet, one
' Throne !'
Britons, hold your own !

POETS AND THEIR BIBLIO-
GRAPHIES.

OLD poets foster'd under friendlier
skies,
Old Virgil who would write ten
lines, they say,
At dawn, and lavish all the golden
day
To make them wealthier in his reader's
eyes ;
And you, old popular Horace, you the
wise
Adviser of the nine-years-ponder'd
lay,
And you, that wear a wreath of
sweeter bay,
Catullus, whose dead songster never
dies ;
If, glancing downward on the kindly
sphere
That once had roll'd you round and
round the Sun,
You see your Art still shrined in
human shelves,
You should be jubilant that you flour-
ished here
Before the Love of Letters, over-
done,
Had swampt the sacred poets with
themselves.

DEMETER

AND OTHER POEMS.

TO THE MARQUIS OF DUFFERIN AND AVA.

I.

At times our Britain cannot rest,
At times her steps are swift and rash;
She moving, at her girdle clash
The golden keys of East and West.

II.

Not swift or rash, when late she lent
The sceptres of her West, her East,
To one, that ruling has increased
Her greatness and her self-content.

III.

Your rule has made the people love
Their ruler. Your viceregal days
Have added fulness to the phrase
Of 'Gauntlet in the velvet glove.'

IV.

But since your name will grow with
Time,
Not all, as honoring your fair fame
Of Statesman, have I made the
name
A golden portal to my rhyme :

V.

But more, that you and yours may
know
From me and mine, how dear a debt
We owed you, and are owing yet
To you and yours, and still would owe.

VI.

For he—your India was his Fate,
And drew him over sea to you—
He fain had ranged her thro' and
thro',
To serve her myriads and the State,—

VII.

A soul that, watch'd from earliest
youth,

And on thro' many a brightening
year,
Had never swerved for craft or fear,
By one side-path, from simple truth ;

VIII.

Who might have chased and claspt
Renown
And caught her chaplet here—and
there
In haunts of jungle-poison'd air
The flame of life went wavering down ;

IX.

But ere he left your fatal shore,
And lay on that funereal boat,
Dying, 'Unspeakable' he wrote
'Their kindness,' and he wrote no
more ;

X.

And sacred is the latest word ;
And now the Was, the Might-have-
been,
And those lone rites I have not seen,
And one drear sound I have not
heard,

XI.

Are dreams that scarce will let me be,
Not there to bid my boy farewell,
When That within the coffin fell,
Fell—and flash'd into the Red Sea,

XII.

Beneath a hard Arabian moon,
And alien stars. To question, why
The sons before the fathers die,
Not mine ! and I may meet him soon ;

XIII.

But while my life's late eve endures,
Nor settles into hueless gray,
My memories of his briefer day
Will mix with love for you and yours.

ON THE JUBILEE OF QUEEN
VICTORIA.

I.

FIFTY times the rose has flower'd
and faded,
Fifty times the golden harvest fallen,
Since our Queen assumed the globe,
the sceptre.

II.

She beloved for a kindliness
Rare in Fable or History,
Queen, and Empress of India,
Crown'd so long with a diadem
Never worn by a worthier,
Now with prosperous auguries
Comes at last to the bounteous
Crowning year of her Jubilee.

III.

Nothing of the lawless, of the Despot,
Nothing of the vulgar, or vainglori-
ous,
All is gracious, gentle, great and
Queenly.

IV.

You then joyfully, all of you,
Set the mountain aflame to-night,
Shoot your stars to the firma-
ment,
Deck your houses, illuminate
All your towns for a festival,
And in each let a multitude
Loyal, each, to the heart of it,
One full voice of allegiance,
Hail the fair Ceremonial
Of this year of her Jubilee.

V.

Queen, as true to womanhood as
Queenhood,
Glorying in the glories of her people,
Sorrowing with the sorrows of the
lowest!

VI.

You, that wanton in affluence,
Spare not now to be bountiful,
Call your poor to regale with
you,
All the lowly, the destitute,
Make their neighborhood health-
fuller,
Give your gold to the Hospital,
Let the weary be comforted,
Let the needy be banqueted,
Let the maim'd in his heart
rejoice
At this glad Ceremonial,
And this year of her Jubilee.

VII.

Henry's fifty years are all in shadow,
Gray with distance Edward's fifty
summers,
Ev'n her Grandsire's fifty half forgot-
ten.

VIII.

You, the Patriot Architect,
You that shape for Eternity,
Raise a stately memorial,
Make it regally gorgeous,
Some Imperial Institute,
Rich in symbol, in ornament,
Which may speak to the centu-
ries,
All the centuries after us,
Of this great Ceremonial,
And this year of her Jubilee.

IX.

Fifty years of ever-broadening Com-
merce!
Fifty years of ever-brightening
Science!
Fifty years of ever-widening Empire!

X.

You, the Mighty, the Fortunate,
You, the Lord-territorial,
You, the Lord-manufacturer,
You, the hardy, laborious,
Patient children of Albion,
You, Canadian, Indian,



THE PRIEST IN HORROR ABOUT HIS ALTAR."—Page 109.

Australasian, African,
All your hearts be in harmony,
All your voices in unison,
Singing 'Hail to the glorious
Golden year of her Jubilee!'

XI.

Are there thunders moaning in the distance?
Are there spectres moving in the darkness?
Trust the Hand of Light will lead her people,
Till the thunders pass, the spectres vanish,
And the Light is Victor, and the darkness
Dawns into the Jubilee of the Ages.

TO PROFESSOR JEBB,

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM.

FAIR things are slow to fade away,
Bear witness you, that yesterday¹
From out the Ghost of Pindar in
you
Roll'd an Olympian; and they say²

That here the torpid mummy wheat
Of Egypt bore a grain as sweet
As that which gilds the glebe of
England,
Sunn'd with a summer of milder heat.

So may this legend for awhile,
If greeted by your classic smile,
Tho' dead in its Trinacrian Enna,
Blossom again on a colder isle.

DEMETER AND PERSEPHONE.

(IN ENNA.)

FAINT as a climate-changing bird that
flies
All night across the darkness, and at
dawn

Falls on the threshold of her native
land,
And can no more, thou camest, O my
child,
Led upward by the God of ghosts and
dreams,
Who laid thee at Eleusis, dazed and
dumb
With passing thro' at once from state
to state,
Until I brought thee hither, that the
day,
When here thy hands let fall the
gather'd flower,
Might break thro' clouded memories
once again
On thy lost self. A sudden nightingale
Saw thee, and flash'd into a frolic of
song
And welcome; and a gleam as of the
moon,
When first she peers along the trem-
ulous deep,
Fled wavering o'er thy face, and
chased away
That shadow of a likeness to the
king
Of shadows, thy dark mate. Perse-
phone!
Queen of the dead no more—my
child! Thine eyes
Again were human-godlike, and the
Sun
Burst from a swimming fleece of win-
ter gray,
And robed thee in his day from head
to feet—
'Mother!' and I was folded in thine
arms.

Child, those imperial, disimpas-
sion'd eyes
Awed even me at first, thy mother—
eyes
That oft had seen the serpent-wanded
power
Draw downward into Hades with
his drift
Of flickering spectres, lighted from
below
By the red race of fiery Phlegethon;
But when before have Gods or men
beheld

¹ In Bologna.

² They say, for the fact is doubtful.

The Life that had descended re-arise,
And lighted from above him by the
Sun?

So mighty was the mother's childless
cry,

A cry that rang thro' Hades, Earth,
and Heaven!

So in this pleasant vale we stand
again,

The field of Enna, now once more
ablaze

With flowers that brighten as thy
footstep falls,

All flowers—but for one black blur of
earth

Left by that closing chasm, thro' which
the car

Of dark Aïdoneus rising rapt thee
hence.

And here, my child, tho' folded in
thine arms,

I feel the deathless heart of mother-
hood

Within me shudder, lest the naked
glebe

Should yawn once more into the gulf,
and thence

The shrilly whinnys of the team of
Hell,

Ascending, pierce the glad and song-
ful air,

And all at once their arch'd necks, mid-
night-maned,

Jet upward thro' the mid-day blossom.
No!

For, see, thy foot has touch'd it; all
the space

Of blank earth-baldness clothes itself
afresh,

And breaks into the crocus-purple
hour

That saw thee vanish.

Child, when thou wert gone,
I envied human wives, and nested
birds,

Yea, the cubb'd lioness; went in
search of thee

Thro' many a palace, many a cot, and
gave

Thy breast to ailing infants in the
night,

And set the mother waking in amaze
To find her sick one whole; and forth
again

Among the wail of midnight winds,
and cried,

'Where is my loved one? Wherefore
do ye wail?'

And out from all the night an answer
shrill'd,

'We know not, and we know not why
we wail.'

I climb'd on all the cliffs of all the seas,
And ask'd the waves that moan about
the world

'Where? do ye make your moaning
for my child?'

And round from all the world the
voices came

'We know not, and we know not why
we moan.'

'Where'? and I stared from every
eagle-peak,

I thridd the black heart of all the
woods,

I peer'd thro' tomb and cave, and in
the storms

Of Autumn swept across the city, and
heard

The murmur of their temples chanting
me,

Me, me, the desolate Mother!
'Where'?—and turn'd,

And fled by many a waste, forlorn of
man,

And grieved for man thro' all my grief
for thee,—

The jungle rooted in his shatter'd
hearth,

The serpent coil'd about his broken
shaft,

The scorpion crawling over naked
skulls;—

I saw the tiger in the ruin'd fane
Spring from his fallen God, but trace
of thee

I saw not; and far on, and, following
out

A league of labyrinthine darkness,
came

On three gray heads beneath a gleam-
ing rift.

'Where'? and I heard one voice from
all the three

'We know not, for we spin the lives of
men,
And not of Gods, and know not why
we spin!
There is a Fate beyond us.' Nothing
knew.

Last as the likeness of a dying man,
Without his knowledge, from him flits
to warn
A far-off friendship that he comes no
more,
So he, the God of dreams, who heard
my cry,
Drew from thyself the likeness of
thyself
Without thy knowledge, and thy
shadow past
Before me, crying 'The Bright one in
the highest
Is brother of the Dark one in the lowest,
And Bright and Dark have sworn that
I, the child
Of thee, the great Earth-Mother, thee,
the Power
That lifts her buried life from gloom
to bloom,
Should be for ever and for evermore
The Bride of Darkness.'

So the Shadow wail'd.
Then I, Earth-Goddess, cursed the
Gods of Heaven.
I would not mingle with their feasts;
to me
Their nectar smack'd of hemlock on
the lips,
Their rich ambrosia tasted aconite.
The man, that only lives and loves an
hour,
Seem'd nobler than their hard Eter-
nities.
My quick tears kill'd the flower, my
ravings hush'd
The bird, and lost in utter grief I fail'd
To send my life thro' olive-yard and-
vine
And golden grain, my gift to helpless
man.
Rain-rotten died the wheat, the barley-
spears
Were hollow-husk'd, the leaf fell, and
the sun,

Pale at my grief, drew down before
his time
Sickening, and Ætna kept her winter
snow.

Then He, the brother of this Dark-
ness, He
Who still is highest, glancing from his
height
On earth a fruitless fallow, when he
miss'd
The wonted steam of sacrifice, the
praise
And prayer of men, decreed that thou
should'st dwell
For nine white moons of each whole
year with me,
Three dark ones in the shadow with
thy King.

Once more the reaper in the gleam
of dawn
Will see me by the landmark far
away,
Blessing his field, or seated in the
dusk
Of even, by the lonely threshing-floor,
Rejoicing in the harvest and the
grange.

Yet I, Earth-Goddess, am but ill-
content
With them, who still are highest.
Those gray heads,
What meant they by their 'Fate
beyond the Fates'
But younger kindlier Gods to bear us
down,
As we bore down the Gods before us?
Gods,
To quench, not hurl the thunderbolt,
to stay,
Not spread the plague, the famine;
Gods indeed,
To send the moon into the night and
break
The sunless halls of Hades into
Heaven?
Till thy dark lord accept and love
the Sun,
And all the Shadow die into the
Light,
When thou shalt dwell the whole
bright year with me,
And souls of men, who grew beyond
their race,

And made themselves as Gods against
 the fear
 Of Death and Hell; and thou that
 hast from men,
 As Queen of Death, that worship
 which is Fear,
 Henceforth, as having risen from out
 the dead,
 Shalt ever send thy life along with
 mine
 From buried grain thro' springing
 blade, and bless
 Their garner'd Autumn also, reap
 with me,
 Earth-mother, in the harvest hymns of
 Earth
 The worship which is Love, and see
 no more
 The Stone, the Wheel, the dimly-
 glimmering lawns
 Of that Elysium, all the hateful
 fires
 Of torment, and the shadowy warrior
 glide
 Along the silent field of Asphodel.

OWD ROÄ.¹

NAÄY, noä mander² o' use to be callin' '
 'im Roä, Roä, Roä,
 Fur the dog's stoän-deäf, an' e's blind,
 'e can naither stan' nor goä.

But I meäns fur to maäke 'is owd aäge
 as 'appy as iver I can,
 Fur I oäws oäd Roäver moor nor I
 iver oäwd mottal man.

Thou's rode of 'is back when a babby,
 afoor thou was gotten too owd,
 Fur 'e'd fetch an' carry like owt, 'e
 was allus as good as gowd.

Eh, but 'e'd fight wi' a will *when* 'e
 fowt; 'e could howd³ is oan,
 An' Roä was the dog as knaw'd when
 an' wheere to bury his boane.

¹ Old Rover. ² Manner. ³ Hold.

An' 'e kep his heäd hoop like a king,
 an' 'e'd niver not down wi' 'is
 taäl,
 Fur 'e'd niver done nowt to be
 ashaämed on, when we was i'
 Howlaby Daäle.

An' 'e sarved me sa well when 'e
 lived, that, Dick, when 'e cooms
 to be deäd,
 I thinks as I'd like fur to hev soom
 soort of a sarvice reäd.

Fur 'e's moor good sense na the Parlia-
 ment man 'at stans fur us 'ere,
 An' I'd voät fur 'im, my oän sen, if 'e
 could but stan fur the Shere.

'Faäithful an' True'—them words be
 i' Scriptur—an' Faäithful an'
 True
 Ull be fun'¹ upo' four short legs ten
 times fur one upo' two.

An' maäybe they'll walk upo' two but
 I knaws they runs upo' four²—
 Bedtime, Dicky! but waäit till tha 'eärs
 it be strikin' the hour.

Fur I wants to tell tha o' Roä when
 we lived i' Howlaby Daäle,
 Ten year sin—Naäy—naäy! tha mun
 nobbut hev' one glass of aäle.

Straänge an' owd-farran'd³ the 'ouse,
 an' belt⁴ long afoor my daäy
 Wi' haäfe o' the chimleys a-twizzen'd⁵
 an' twined like a band o' haäy.

The fellers as maäkes them picturs
 'ud coom at the fall o' the year,
 An' saddle their ends upo' stools to
 pictur the door-poorch theere,

An' the Heagle 'as hed two heäds
 stannin' theere o' the brokken
 stick;⁶

¹ Found. ² 'Ou' as in 'house.'

³ 'Owd-farran'd,' old-fashioned.

⁴ Built.

⁵ 'Twizzen'd,' twisted.

⁶ On a staff *ragulé*.

An' they niver 'ed seed sich ivin'¹ as
graw'd hall ower the brick;

An' theere i' the 'ouse one night—
but it's down, an' all on it now
Goan into mangles an' tonups,² an'
raäved slick thruf by the plow—

There, when the 'ouse wur a house,
one night I wur sittin' aloän,
Wi Roäver athurt my feeät, an'
sleeäpin still as a stoän,

Of a Christmas Eäve, an' as cowl as
this, an' the midders³ as white,
An' the fences all on 'em bolster'd oop
wi' the windle⁴ that night;

An' the cat wur a-sleeäpin alongside
Roäver, but I wur awaäke,
An' smoäkin' an' thinkin' o' things—
Doänt maäke thysen sick wi'
the caäke.

Fur the men ater supper 'ed sung their
songs an' 'ed 'ed their beer,
An' 'ed goän their waäys; ther was
nobbut three, an' noän on 'em
there.

They was all on 'em fear'd o' the
Ghoäst an' dussn't not sleeäp i'
the 'ouse,
But Dicky, the Ghoäst moästlins⁵ was
nobbut a rat or a mouse.

An' I looökt out wonst⁶ at the night,
an' the daäle was all of a thaw,
Fur I seed the beck coomin' down like
a long black snaäke i' the snaw,

An' I heärd greät heäps o' the snaw
slushin' down fro' the bank to
the beck,

An' then as I stood i' the doorwaäy, I
feeäld it drip o' my neck.

Saw I turn'd in ageän, an' I thowt o'
the good owd times 'at was
goan,

An' the munney they maäde by the
war, an' the times 'at was
coomin' on;

Fur I thowt if the Staäte was a gawin'
to let in furriners' wheät,
Howiver was British farmers to stan'
ageän o' their feeät.

Howiver was I fur to find my rent an'
to paäy my men?
An' all along o' the feller¹ as turn'd
'is back of hissen.

Thou slep i' the chamber above us,
we couldn't ha' 'eärd tha call,
Moothor 'ed tell'd ma to bring tha
down, an' thy craädle an' all;

Fur the gell o' the farm 'at slep wi'
tha then 'ed gotten wer leäve,
Fur to goä that night to 'er foälk by
cause o' the Christmas Eäve;

But I cleän forgot tha, my lad, when
Moothor 'ed gotten to bed,
An' I slep i' my chair hup-on-end, an'
the Freeä Traäde runn'd 'i my
'ead,

Till I dreäm'd 'at Squire walkt in, an'
I says to him 'Squire, ya're
laäte,'

Then I seed at 'is faäce wur as red as
the Yule-block theer i' the
graäte.

An' 'e says 'can ya paäy me the rent
to-night?' an' I says to 'im
'Noä,'

An' 'e catch'd howd hard o' my hairm²
'Then hout to-night tha shall
goä.'

'Tha'll niver,' says I, 'be a-turnin ma
hout upo' Christmas Eäve'?

Then I waäked an' I fun it was
Roäver a-tuggin' an' teärin' my
slicäve.

¹ Ivy. ² Mangolds and turnips.

³ Meadows. ⁴ Drifted snow.

⁵ Moästlins, ' for the most part, generally.

⁶ Once.

¹ Peel.

² Arm.

An' I thowt as 'e'd goän cleän-wud¹,
fur I noäwaäys knaw'd 'is
intent;

An' I says 'Git awaäy, ya beäst,' an' I
fetcht 'im a kick an' 'e went.

Then 'e tumbled up stairs, fur I 'eärd
'im, as if 'e'd 'a brokken 'is
neck,

An' I'd cleär forgot, little Dicky, thy
chaumber door wouldn't sneck;²

An' I slep' i' my chair ageän wi' my
hairm hingin' down to the floor,
An' I thowt it was Roäver a-tuggin' an'
teärin' me wuss nor afoor,

An' I thowt 'at I kick'd 'im ageän,
but I kick'd thy Moother
instead.

'What arta snorin' theere fur? the
house is afire,' she said.

Thy Moother 'ed beän a-naggin about
the gell o' the farm,

She offens 'ud spy summut wrong
when there warn't not a mossel
o' harm;

An' she didn't not solidly meän I wur
gawin' that waäy to the bad,
Fur the gell³ was as howry a trollope
as iver traäpes'd i' the squad.

But Moother was free of 'er tongue, as
I offens 'ev tell'd 'er mysen,
Sa I kep i' my chair, fur I thowt she
was nobbut a-rilin' ma then.

An' I says 'I'd be good to tha, Bess, if
tha'd onywaäys let ma be good,'
But she skelpt ma haäfe ower i' the
chair, an' screeäd like a Howl
gone wud⁴—

¹ Mad.

² Latch.

³ The girl was as dirty a slut as ever
trudged in the mud, but there is a sense of
slatternliness in 'traäpes'd' which is not
expressed in 'trudged.'

⁴ She half overturned me and shrieked
like an owl gone mad.

'Ya mum run fur the leather.¹ Git
oop, if ya're onywaäys good for
owt.'

And I says 'If I beänt noäwaäys—not
nowadaäys—good fur nowt—

Yit I beänt sich a Nowt² of all Nowts
as 'ull hallus do as 'e's bid.'

'But the stairs is afire,' she said; then
I seed 'er a-cryin', I did.

An' she beäld 'Ya mun saäve little
Dick, an' be sharp about it an'
all,'

Sa I runs to the yard fur a lether, an'
sets 'im ageän the wall,

An' I claums an' I mashes the winder
hin, when I gits to the top,
But the heat druv hout i' my heyes till
I feäld mysen ready to drop.

Thy Moother was howdin' the lether,
an' tellin' me not to be skeärd,
An' I wasn't afeärd, or I thinks leäst-
waäys as I wasn't afeärd;

But I couldn't see fur the smoäke
wheere thou was a-liggin, my
lad,

An' Roäver was theere i' the chaum-
ber a-yowlin' an' yaupin' like
mad;

An' thou was a-beälan' likewise, an' a-
squeälin', as if tha was bit,
An' it wasn't a bite but a burn, fur the
merk's³ o' thy shou'der yit;

Then I call'd out Roä, Roä, Roä, thaw
I didn't haäfe think as 'e'd 'ear,
*But 'e coom'd thruf the fire wi' my
bairn i' 'is mouth to the winder
there!*

He coom'd like a Hangel o' marcy as
soon as 'e 'eärd 'is naäme,
Or like tother Hangel i' Scriptur 'at
summun seed i' the flaäme,

¹ Ladder. ² A thoroughly insignifi-
cant or worthless person. ³ Mark.

When summun 'ed hax'd fur a son, an
'e promised a son to she,
An' Roä was as good as the Hangel i'
saävin' a son fur me.

Sa I browt tha down, an' I says' 'I
mun gaw up ageän fur Roä.'
'Gaw up ageän fur the varmint?' I
tell'd 'er 'Yes I mun goä.'

An' I claumb'd up ageän to the winder,
än' clemm'd¹ owd Roä by the
'eäd,

An' 'is 'air coom'd off i' my 'ands an'
I taäked 'im at fust fur deäd;

Fur 'e smell'd like a herse a-singein',
an' seem'd as blind as a poop,
An' haäfe on 'im bare as a bublin'.²
I couldn't wakken 'im oop,

But I browt 'im down, an' we got to
the barn, fur the barn wouldn't
burn

Wi' the wind blawin' hard tother waäy,
an' the wind wasn't like to turn.

An' I kep a-callin' o' Roä till 'e wag-
gled 'is taäil fur a bit,

But the cocks kep a-crawin' an'
crawin' all night, an' I 'ears 'em
yit;

An' the dogs was a-yowlin' all round,
and thou was a-squeälin' thysen,

An' Moother was naggin' an' groänin'
an' moänin' an' naggin' ageän;

An' I 'eärd the bricks an' the baulks³
rummle down when the roof
gev waäy,

Fur the fire was a-raägin' an' raävin'
an' roarin' like judgment daäy.

Warm enew theree sewer-ly, but the
barn was as cowl as owt,
An' we cuddled and huddled together,
an' happt⁴ wersens oop as we
mowt.

An' I browt Roä round, but Moother
'ed bean sa soäk'd wi' the thaw
'At she cotch'd 'er death o' cowl that
night, poor soul, i' the straw.

Haäfe o' the parish runn'd oop when
the rigtree¹ was tummlin' in—
Too laäte—but it's all ower now—hall
hower—an' ten year sin;

Too laäte, tha mun git tha to bed, but
I'll coom an' I'll squench the
light,

Fur we moät 'ev naw moor fires—and
soa little Dick, good-night.

VASTNESS.

I.

MANY a hearth upon our dark globe
sighs after many a vanish'd
face,

Many a planet by many a sun may roll
with the dust of a vanish'd race.

II.

Raving politics, never at rest—as this
poor earth's pale history runs,—
What is it all but a trouble of ants in
the gleam of a million million
of suns?

III.

Lies upon this side, lies upon that side,
truthless violence mourn'd by
the Wise,

Thousands of voices drowning his own
in a popular torrent of lies upon
lies;

IV.

Stately purposes, valor in battle, glori-
ous annals of army and fleet,
Death for the right cause, death for the
wrong cause, trumpets of victory,
groans of defeat;

¹ Clutched.

² 'Bubbling,' a young unfledged bird.

³ Beams. ⁴ Wrapt ourselves.

¹ The beam that runs along the roof of
the house just beneath the ridge.

V.

Innocence seethed in her mother's
milk, and Charity setting the
martyr aflame ;
Thralldom who walks with the banner
of Freedom, and recks not
to ruin a realm in her name.

VI.

Faith at her zenith, or all but lost in
the gloom of doubts that darken
the schools ;
Craft with a bunch of all-heal in her
hand, follow'd up by her vassal
legion of fools ;

VII.

Trade flying over a thousand seas with
her spice and her vintage, her
silk and her corn ;
Desolate offing, sailorless harbors,
famishing populace, wharves
forlorn ;

VIII.

Star of the morning, Hope in the sun-
rise ; gloom of the evening, Life
at a close ;
Pleasure who flaunts on her wide
downway with her flying robe
and her poison'd rose ;

IX.

Pain, that has crawl'd from the corpse
of Pleasure, a worm which
writhes all day, and at night
Stirs up again in the heart of the
sleeper, and stings him back to
the curse of the light ;

X.

Wealth with his wines and his wedded
harlots ; honest Poverty, bare
to the bone ;
Opulent Avarice, lean as Poverty ;
Flattery gilding the rift in a
throne ;

XI.

Fame blowing out from her golden
trumpet a jubilant challenge to
Time and to Fate ;
Slander, her shadow, sowing the nettle
on all the laurel'd graves of
the Great ;

XII.

Love for the maiden, crown'd with
marriage, no regrets for aught
that has been,
Household happiness, gracious chil-
dren, debtless competence,
golden mean ;

XIII.

National hatreds of whole genera-
tions, and pigmy spites of the
village spire ;
Vows that will last to the last death-
ruckle, and vows that are snapt
in a moment of fire ;

XIV.

He that has lived for the lust of the
minute, and died in the doing
it, flesh without mind ;
He that has nail'd all flesh to the
Cross, till Self died out in the
love of his kind ;

XV.

Spring and Summer and Autumn and
Winter, and all these old
revolutions of earth ;
All new-old revolutions of Empire—
change of the tide—what is all
of it worth ?

XVI.

What the philosophies, all the sci-
ences, poesy, varying voices of
prayer ?
All that is noblest, all that is basest,
all that is filthy with all that is
fair ?

XVII.

What is it all, if we all of us end but
in being our own corpse-coffins
at last,
Swallow'd in Vastness, lost in Silence,
drown'd in the deeps of a
meaningless Past?

XVIII.

What but a murmur of gnats in the
gloom, or a moment's anger of
bees in their hive?—

* * * *

Peace, let it be! for I loved him, and
love him for ever: the dead are
not dead but alive.

Dedicated to the
Hon. J. Russell Lowell.

THE RING.

MIRIAM AND HER FATHER.

Miriam (singing).

MELLOW moon of heaven,
Bright in blue,
Moon of married hearts,
Hear me, you!

Twelve times in the year
Bring me bliss,
Globing Honey Moons
Bright as this.

Moon, you fade at times
From the night.
Young again you grow
Out of sight.

Silver crescent-curve,
Coming soon,
Globe again, and make
Honey Moon.

Shall not *my* love last,
Moon, with you,
For ten thousand years
Old and new?

Father. And who was he with
such love-drunken eyes
They made a thousand honey moons
of one?

Miriam. The prophet of his own,
my Hubert—his
The words, and mine the setting.
'Air and Words,'
Said Hubert, when I sang the song,
'are bride
And bridegroom.' Does it please
you?

Father. Mainly, child,
Because I hear your Mother's voice
in yours.

She—, why, you shiver tho' the
wind is west

With all the warmth of summer.

Miriam. Well, I felt
On a sudden I know not what, a
breath that past

With all the cold of winter.

Father (muttering to himself).
Even so.

The Ghost in Man, the Ghost that
once was Man,

But cannot wholly free itself from
Man,

Are calling to each other thro' a
dawn

Stranger than earth has ever seen;
the veil

Is rending, and the Voices of the day
Are heard across the Voices of the
dark.

No sudden heaven, nor sudden hell,
for man,

But thro' the Will of One who knows
and rules—

And utter knowledge is but utter
love—

Æonian Evolution, swift or slow,
Thro' all the Spheres—an ever open-
ing height,

An ever lessening earth—and she
perhaps,

My Miriam, breaks her latest earthly
link

With me to-day.

Miriam. You speak so low, what
is it?
Your 'Miriam breaks'—is making a
new link

Breaking an old one ?

Father. No, for we, my child,
Have been till now each other's all-in-
all.

Miriam. And you the lifelong
guardian of the child.

Father. I, and one other whom
you have not known.

Miriam. And who? what other?

Father. Whither are you bound?
For Naples which we only left in May?

Miriam. No! father, Spain, but
Hubert brings me home

With April and the swallow. Wish
me joy!

Father. What need to wish when
Hubert weds in you
The heart of Love, and you the soul
of Truth

In Hubert?

Miriam. Tho' you used to call me
once
The lonely maiden-Princess of the
wood,
Who meant to sleep her hundred
summers out
Before a kiss should wake her.

Father. Ay, but now
Your fairy Prince has found you, take
this ring.

Miriam. 'Io t'amo'—and these
diamonds—beautiful!
'From Walter,' and for me from you
then?

Father. Well,
One way for Miriam.

Miriam. Miriam am I not?

Father. This ring bequeath'd you
by your mother, child,
Was to be given you—such her dying
wish—
Given on the morning when you came
of age
Or on the day you married. Both the
days
Now close in one. The ring is doubly
yours.

Why do you look so gravely at the
tower?

Miriam. I never saw it yet so all
ablaze
With creepers crimsoning to the pin-
nacles,

As if perpetual sunset linger'd there,
And all ablaze too in the lake below!
And how the birds that circle round
the tower
Are cheeping to each other of their
flight
To summer lands!

Father. And that has made you
grave?

Fly—care not. Birds and brides
must leave the nest.

Child, I am happier in your happiness
Than in my own.

Miriam. It is not that!

Father. What else?

Miriam. That chamber in the
tower.

Father. What chamber, child?
Your nurse is here?

Miriam. My Mother's nurse and
mine.
She comes to dress me in my bridal
veil.

Father. What did she say?

Miriam. She said, that you and I
Had been abroad for my poor health
so long
She fear'd I had forgotten her, and I
ask'd

About my Mother, and she said, 'Thy
hair
Is golden like thy Mother's, not so
fine.'

Father. What then? what more?

Miriam. She said—perhaps indeed
She wander'd, having wander'd now
so far

Beyond the common date of death—
that you,

When I was smaller than the statuette
Of my dear Mother on your bracket
here—

You took me to that chamber in the
tower,

The topmost—a chest there, by which
you knelt—

And there were books and dresses—
left to me,

A ring too which you kiss'd, and I, she
said,

I babbled, Mother, Mother—as I used
To prattle to her picture—stretch'd
my hands

As if I saw her; then a woman came
And caught me from my nurse. I
hear her yet—

A sound of anger like a distant storm.

Father. Garrulous old crone.

Miriam. Poor nurse!

Father. I bad her keep,
Like a seal'd book, all mention of the
ring,

For I myself would tell you all to-day.

Miriam. 'She too might speak to-
day,' she mumbled. Still,

I scarce have learnt the title of your
book,

But you will turn the pages.

Father. Ay, to-day!

I brought you to that chamber on your
third

September birthday with your nurse,
and felt

An icy breath play on me, while I
stoop

To take and kiss the ring.

Miriam. This very ring
Is t'amo?

Father. Yes, for some wild hope
was mine

That, in the misery of my married life,
Miriam your Mother might appear to
me.

She came to you, not me. The storm,
you hear

Far-off, is Muriel—your step-mother's
voice.

Miriam. Vext, that you thought
my Mother came to me?

Or at my crying 'Mother?' or to find
My Mother's diamonds hidden from
her there,

Like worldly beauties in the Cell, not
shown

To dazzle all that see them?

Father. Wait a while.

Your Mother and step-mother—Mir-
iam Erne

And Muriel Erne—the two were cous-
ins—lived

With Muriel's mother on the down,
that sees

A thousand squares of corn and
meadow, far

As the gray deep, a landscape which
your eyes

Have many a time ranged over when
a babe.

Miriam. I climb'd the hill with
Hubert yesterday,

And from the thousand squares, one
silent voice

Came on the wind, and seem'd to say
'Again.'

We saw far off an old forsaken house,
Then home, and past the ruin'd mill.

Father. And there

I found these cousins often by the
brook,

For Miriam sketch'd and Muriel threw
the fly;

The girls of equal age, but one was fair,
And one was dark, and both were
beautiful.

No voice for either spoke within my
heart

Then, for the surface eye, that only
doats

On outward beauty, glancing from the
one

To the other, knew not that which
pleased it most,

The raven ringlet or the gold; but
both

Were dowerless, and myself, I used to
walk

This Terrace—morbid, melancholy;
mine

And yet not mine the hall, the farm,
the field;

For all that ample woodland whisper'd
'debt,'

The brook that feeds this lakelet mur-
mur'd 'debt,'

And in yon arching avenue of old elms,
Tho' mine, not mine, I heard the sober
rook

And carrion crow cry 'Mortgage.'

Miriam. Father's fault

Visited on the children!

Father. Ay, but then

A kinsman, dying, summon'd me to
Rome—

He left me wealth—and while I jour-
ney'd hence,

And saw the world fly by me like a
dream,

And while I communed with my
truest self,

I woke to all of truest in myself,
Till, in the gleam of those mid-sum-
mer dawns,
The form of Muriel faded, and the
face
Of Miriam grew upon me, till I knew;
And past and future mix'd in Heaven
and made
The rosy twilight of a perfect day.

Miriam. So glad? no tear for him,
who left you wealth,
Your kinsman?

Father. I had seen the man but
once;

He loved my name not me; and then
I pass'd

Home, and thro' Venice, where a jew-
eller,

So far gone down, or so far up in life,
That he was nearing his own hundred,
sold

This ring to me, then laugh'd 'the
ring is weird.'

And weird and worn and wizard-like
was he.

'Why weird?' I ask'd him; and he
said 'The souls

Of two repentant Lovers guard the
ring;'

Then with a ribald twinkle in his
bleak eyes—

'And if you give the ring to any maid,
They still remember what it cost them
here,

And bind the maid to love you by the
ring;

And if the ring were stolen from the
maid,

The theft were death or madness to
the thief,

So sacred those Ghost Lovers hold
the gift.'

And then he told their legend:

'Long ago
Two lovers parted by a scurrilous tale
Had quarrell'd, till the man repenting
sent

This ring "Io t'amo" to his best be-
loved,

And sent it on her birthday. She in
wrath

Return'd it on her birthday, and that
day

His death-day, when, half-frenzied by
the ring,

He wildly fought a rival suitor, him
The causer of that scandal, fought and
fell;

And she that came to part them all too
late,

And found a corpse and silence, drew
the ring

From his dead finger, wore it till her
death,

Shrined him within the temple of her
heart,

Made every moment of her after life
A virgin victim to his memory,

And dying rose, and rear'd her arms,
and cried

"I see him, Io t'amo, Io t'amo."

Miriam. Legend or true? so ten-
der should be true!

Did *he* believe it? did you ask him?

Father. Ay!

But that half skeleton, like a barren
ghost

From out the fleshless world of spirits,
laugh'd:

A hollow laughter!

Miriam. Vile, so near the ghost
Himself, to laugh at love in death!
But you?

Father. Well, as the bygone lover
thro this ring

Had sent his cry for her forgiveness, I
Would call thro' this 'Io t'amo' to the
heart

Of Miriam; then I bad the man en-
grave

'From Walter' on the ring, and send
it—wrote

Name, surname, all as clear as noon,
but he—

Some younger hand must have
engraven the ring—

His fingers were so stiffen'd by the
frost

Of seven and ninety winters, that he
scrawl'd

A 'Miriam' that might seem a
'Muriel';

And Muriel claim'd and open'd what I
meant

For Miriam, took the ring, and
flaunted it

Before that other whom I loved and love.
 A mountain stay'd me here, a minister there,
 A galleried palace, or a battlefield,
 Where stood the sheaf of Peace: but—coming home—
 And on your Mother's birthday—all but yours—
 A week betwixt—and when the tower as now
 Was all ablaze with crimson to the roof,
 And all ablaze too plunging in the lake
 Head-foremost—who were those that stood between
 The tower and that rich phantom of the tower?
 Muriel and Miriam, each in white, and like
 May-blossoms in mid autumn—was it they?
 A light shot upward on them from the lake.
 What sparkled there? whose hand was that? they stood
 So close together. I am not keen of sight,
 But coming nearer—Muriel had the ring—
 'O Miriam! have you given your ring to her?
 O Miriam!' Miriam reddened, Muriel clench'd
 The hand that wore it, till I cried again:
 'O Miriam, if you love me take the ring!
 She glanced at me, at Muriel, and was mute.
 'Nay, if you cannot love me, let it be.'
 Then—Muriel standing ever statue-like—
 She turn'd, and in her soft imperial way
 And saying gently: 'Muriel, by your leave,'
 Unclosed the hand, and from it drew the ring,
 And gave it me, who pass'd it down her own,
 'Io t'amo, all is well then.' Muriel fled.

Miriam. Poor Muriel!
Father. Ay, poor Muriel when you hear
 What follows! Miriam loved me from the first,
 Not thro' the ring; but on her marriage-morn
 This birthday, death-day, and betrothal ring,
 Laid on her table overnight, was gone;
 And after hours of search and doubt and threats,
 And hubbub, Muriel enter'd with it,
 'See!—
 Found in a chink of that old moulder'd floor!'
 My Miriam nodded with a pitying smile,
 As who should say 'that those who lose can find.'
 Then I and she were married for a year,
 One year without a storm, or even a cloud;
 And you my Miriam born within the year;
 And she my Miriam dead within the year.
 I sat beside her dying, and she gaspt:
 'The books, the miniature, the lace are hers,
 My ring too when she comes of age, or when
 She marries; you—you loved me, kept your word.
 You love me still "Io t'amo."—
 Muriel—no—
 She cannot love; she loves her own hard self,
 Her firm will, her fix'd purpose. Promise me,
 Miriam not Muriel—she shall have the ring.'
 And there the light of other life, which lives
 Beyond our burial and our buried eyes,
 Gleam'd for a moment in her own on earth.
 I swore the vow, then with my latest kiss
 Upon them, closed her eyes, which would not close,

But kept their watch upon the ring
and you.

Your birthday was her death-day.

Miriam. O poor Mother!
And you, poor desolate Father, and
poor me,

The little senseless, worthless, word-
less babe,

Saved when your life was wreck'd!

Father. Desolate? yes!
Desolate as that sailor, whom the
storm

Had parted from his comrade in the
boat,

And dash'd half dead on barren sands,
was I.

Nay, you were my one solace; only—
you

Were always ailing. Muriel's mother
sent,

And sure am I, by Muriel, one day
came

And saw you, shook her head, and
patted yours,

And smiled, and making with a kindly
pinch

Each poor pale cheek a momentary
rose—

'That should be fix'd,' she said; 'your
pretty bud,

So blighted here, would flower into
full health

Among our heath and bracken. Let
her come!

And we will feed her with our moun-
tain air,

And send her home to you rejoicing.'
No—

We could not part. And once, when
you my girl

Rode on my shoulder home—the tiny
fist

Had grasp'd a daisy from your Mother's
grave—

By the lych-gate was Muriel. 'Ay,'
she said,

'Among the tombs in this damp vale
of yours!

You scorn my Mother's warning, but
the child

Is paler than before. We often walk
In open sun, and see beneath our
feet

The mist of autumn gather from your
lake,

And shroud the tower; and once we
only saw

Your gilded vane, a light above the
mist?—

(Our old bright bird that still is veer-
ing there

Above his four gold letters) 'and the
light,'

She said, 'was like that light'—and
there she paused,

And long; till I believing that the
girl's

Lean fancy, groping for it, could not
find

One likeness, laugh'd a little and found
her two—

'A warrior's crest above the cloud of
war'—

'A fiery phoenix rising from the smoke,
The pyre he burnt in.'—'Nay,' she
said, 'the light

That glimmers on the marsh and on
the grave.'

And spoke no more, but turn'd and
pass'd away.

Miriam, I am not surely one of those
Caught by the flower that closes on
the fly,

But after ten slow weeks her fix'd
intent,

In aiming at an all but hopeless mark
To strike it, struck; I took, I left you
there;

I came, I went, was happier day by
day;

For Muriel nursed you with a mother's
care;

Till on that clear and heather-scented
height

The rounder cheek had brighten'd into
bloom.

She always came to meet me carrying
you,

And all her talk was of the babe she
loved;

So, following her old pastime of the
brook,

She threw the fly for me; but oftener
left

That angling to the mother. 'Muriel's
health

Had weaken'd, nursing little Miriam.
 Strange!
 She used to shun the wailing babe,
 and doats
 On this of yours.' But when the
 matron saw
 That hinted love was only wasted bait,
 Not risen to, she was bolder. 'Ever
 since
 You sent the fatal ring'—I told her
 'sent
 To Miriam,' 'Doubtless—ay, but ever
 since
 In all the world my dear one sees but
 you—
 In your sweet babe she finds but you
 —she makes
 Her heart a mirror that reflects but
 you.'
 And then the tear fell, the voice
 broke. *Her heart!*
 I gazed into the mirror, as a man
 Who sees his face in water, and a
 stone,
 That glances from the bottom of the
 pool,
 Strike upward thro' the shadow; yet
 at last,
 Gratitude—loneliness—desire to keep
 So skilled a nurse about you always—
 nay!
 Some half remorseful kind of pity
 too—
 Well! well, you know I married
 Muriel Erne.
 'I take thee Muriel for my wedded
 wife'—
 I had forgotten it was your birthday,
 child—
 When all at once with some electric
 thrill
 A cold air pass'd between us, and the
 hands
 Fell from each other, and were join'd
 again.
 No second cloudless honeymoon
 was mine.
 For by and by she sicken'd of the
 farce,
 She dropt the gracious mask of
 motherhood,
 She came no more to meet me, carry-
 ing you,

Nor ever cared to set you on her knee,
 Nor ever let you gambol in her sight,
 Nor ever cheer'd you with a kindly
 smile,
 Nor ever ceased to clamor for the
 ring;
 Why had I sent the ring at first to her?
 Why had I made her love me thro'
 the ring,
 And then had changed? so fickle are
 men—the best!
 Not she—but now my love was hers
 again,
 The ring by right, she said, was hers
 again.
 At times too shrilling in her angrier
 moods,
 'That weak and watery nature love
 you? No!
 "*Io t'amo, Io t'amo*"!' flung herself
 Against my heart, but often while her
 lips
 Were warm upon my cheek, an icy
 breath,
 As from the grating of a sepulchre,
 Past over both. I told her of my
 vow,
 No pliable idiot I to break my vow;
 But still she made her outcry for the
 ring;
 For one monotonous fancy madden'd
 her,
 Till I myself was madden'd with her
 cry,
 And even that '*Io t'amo*,' those three
 sweet
 Italian words, became a weariness.
 My people too were scared with
 eerie sounds,
 A footstep, a low throbbing in the
 walls,
 A noise of falling weights that never
 fell,
 Weird whispers, bells that rang with-
 out a hand,
 Door-handles turn'd when none was
 at the door,
 And bolted doors that open'd of them-
 selves:
 And one betwixt the dark and light
 had seen
Her, bending by the cradle of her
 babe.

Miriam. And I remember once
that being waked
By noises in the house—and no one
near—
I cried for nurse, and felt a gentle
hand
Fall on my forehead, and a sudden
face
Look'd in upon me like a gleam and
pass'd,
And I was quieted, and slept again.
Or is it some half memory of a
dream?

Father. Your fifth September
birthday.

Miriam. And the face,
The hand,—my Mother.

Father. Miriam, on that day
Two lovers parted by no scurrilous
tale—

Mere want of gold—and still for
twenty years

Bound by the golden cord of their
first love—

Had ask'd us to their marriage, and to
share

Their marriage-banquet. Muriel,
paler then

Than ever you were in your cradle,
moan'd,

'I am fitter for my bed, or for my
grave,

I cannot go, go you.' And then she
rose,

She clung to me with such a hard
embrace,

So lingeringly long, that half-amazed
I parted from her, and I went alone.

And when the bridegroom murmur'd,
'With this ring,'

I felt for what I could not find, the key,
The guardian of her relics, of *her* ring.

I kept it as a sacred amulet
About me,—gone! and gone in that

embrace!
Then, hurrying home, I found her not

in house
Or garden—up the tower—an icy air
Fled by me.—There, the chest was

open—all
The sacred relics tost about the floor—

Among them Muriel lying on her
face—

I raised her, call'd her 'Muriel, Muriel
wake!'

The fatal ring lay near her; the glazed
eye

Glared at me as in horror. Dead! I
took

And chafed the freezing hand. A red
mark ran

All round one finger pointed straight,
the rest

Were crumpled inwards. Dead!—
and maybe stung

With some remorse, had stolen, worn
the ring—

Then torn it from her finger, or as
if—

For never had I seen her show re-
morse—

As if—

Miriam. —those two Ghost lov-
ers—

Father. Lovers yet—

Miriam. Yes, yes!

Father. —but dead so long, gone
up so far,

That now their ever-rising life has
dwarf'd

Or lost the moment of their past on
earth,

As we forget our wail at being born.

As if—

Miriam. a dearer ghost had—

Father. —wrench'd it away.

Miriam. Had floated in with sad
reproachful eyes,

Till from her own hand she had torn
the ring

In fright, and fallen dead. And I
myself

Am half afraid to wear it.

Father. Well, no more!

No bridal music this! but fear not
you!

You have the ring she guarded; that
poor link

With earth is broken, and has left her
free,

Except that, still drawn downward for
an hour,

Her spirit hovering by the church,
where she

Was married too, may linger, till she
sees

Her maiden coming like a Queen,
 who leaves
 Some colder province in the North to
 gain
 Her capital city, where the loyal bells
 Clash welcome—linger, till her own,
 the babe
 She lean'd to from her Spiritual
 sphere,
 Her lonely maiden-Princess, crown'd
 with flowers,
 Has enter'd on the larger woman-
 world
 Of wives and mothers.

But the bridal veil—
 Your nurse is waiting. Kiss me child
 and go.

FORLORN.

I.

'HE is fled—I wish him dead—
 He that wrought my ruin—
 O the flattery and the craft
 Which were my undoing . . .
 In the night, in the night,
 When the storms are blowing.

II.

'Who was witness of the crime?
 Who shall now reveal it?
 He is fled, or he is dead,
 Marriage will conceal it . . .
 In the night, in the night,
 While the gloom is growing.'

III.

Catherine, Catherine, in the night,
 What is this you're dreaming?
 There is laughter down in Hell
 At your simple scheming . . .
 In the night, in the night,
 When the ghosts are fleeing.

IV.

You to place a hand in his
 Like an honest woman's,
 You that lie with wasted lungs

Waiting for your summons . . .
 In the night, O the night!
 O the deathwatch beating!

V.

There will come a witness soon
 Hard to be confuted,
 All the world will hear a voice
 Scream you are polluted . . .
 In the night! O the night,
 When the owls are wailing!

VI.

Shame and marriage, Shame and
 marriage,
 Fright and foul dissembling,
 Bantering bridesman, reddening
 priest,
 Tower and altar trembling . . .
 In the night, O the night,
 When the mind is failing!

VII.

Mother, dare you kill your child?
 How your hand is shaking!
 Daughter of the seed of Cain,
 What is this you're taking? . . .
 In the night, O the night,
 While the house is sleeping.

VIII.

Dreadful! has it come to this,
 O unhappy creature?
 You that would not tread on a worm
 For your gentle nature . . .
 In the night, O the night,
 O the night of weeping!

IX.

Murder would not veil your sin,
 Marriage will not hide it,
 Earth and Hell will brand your
 name,
 Wretch you must abide it . . .
 In the night, O the night,
 Long before the dawning.

X.

Up, get up, and tell him all,
 Tell him you were lying!

Do not die with a lie in your mouth,
 You that know you're dying . . .
 In the night, O the night,
 While the grave is yawning.

XI.

No—you will not die before,
 Tho' you'll ne'er be stronger;
 You will live till *that* is born,
 Then a little longer . . .
 In the night, O the night,
 While the Fiend is prowling.

XII.

Death and marriage, Death and
 marriage!
 Funeral hearses rolling!
 Black with bridal favors mixt!
 Bridal bells with tolling! . . .
 In the night, O the night,
 When the wolves are howling.

XIII.

Up, get up, the time is short,
 Tell him now or never!
 Tell him all before you die,
 Lest you die for ever . . .
 In the night, O the night,
 Where there's no forgetting.

XIV.

Up she got, and wrote him all,
 All her tale of sadness,
 Blister'd every word with tears,
 And eased her heart of mad-
 ness . . .
 In the night, and nigh the dawn,
 And while the moon was setting.

HAPPY.

THE LEPER'S BRIDE.

I.

WHY wail you, pretty plover? and
 what is it that you fear?
 Is he sick your mate like mine?
 have you lost him, is he fled?

And there—the heron rises from his
 watch beside the mere,
 And flies above the leper's hut,
 where lives the living-dead.

II.

Come back, nor let me know it!
 would he live and die alone?
 And has he not forgiven me yet,
 his over-jealous bride,
 Who am, and was, and will be his,
 his own and only own,
 To share his living death with him,
 die with him side by side?

III.

Is that the leper's hut on the solitary
 moor,
 Where noble Ulric dwells forlorn,
 and wears the leper's weed?
 The door is open. He! is he stand-
 ing at the door,
 My soldier of the Cross? it is he
 and he indeed!

IV.

My roses—will he take them *now*—
 mine, his—from off the tree
 We planted both together, happy
 in our marriage morn?
 O God, I could blaspheme, for he
 fought Thy fight for Thee,
 And Thou hast made him leper to
 compass him with scorn—

V.

Hast spared the flesh of thousands,
 the coward and the base,
 And set a crueller mark than Cain's
 on him, the good and brave!
 He sees me, waves me from him. I
 will front him face to face.
 You need not wave me from you.
 I would leap into your grave.

* * * *

VI.

My warrior of the Holy Cross and of
 the conquering sword,

The roses that you cast aside—once
more I bring you these.
No nearer? do you scorn me when
you tell me, O my lord,
You would not mar the beauty of
your bride with your disease.

VII.

You say your body is so foul—then
here I stand apart,
Who yearn to lay my loving head
upon your leprous breast.
The leper plague may scale my skin
but never taint my heart;
Your body is not foul to me, and
body is foul at best.

VIII.

I loved you first when young and fair,
but now I love you most;
The fairest flesh at last is filth on
which the worm will feast;
This poor rib-grated dungeon of the
holy human ghost,
This house with all its hateful needs
no cleaner than the beast,

IX.

This coarse diseaseful creature which
in Eden was divine,
This Satan-haunted ruin, this little
city of sewers,
This wall of solid flesh that comes be-
tween your soul and mine,
Will vanish and give place to the
beauty that endures,

X.

The beauty that endures on the Spirit-
ual height,
When we shall stand transfigured,
like Christ on Hermon hill,
And moving each to music, soul in soul
and light in light,
Shall flash thro' one another in a
moment as we will.

XI.

Foul! foul! the word was yours not
mine, I worship that right hand

Which fell'd the foes before you as
the woodman fells the wood,
And sway'd the sword that lighten'd
back the sun of Holy land,
And clove the Moslem crescent
moon, and changed it into blood.

XII.

And once I worshipt all too well this
creature of decay,
For Age will chink the face, and
Death will freeze the supplest
limbs—
Yet you in your mid manhood—O the
grief when yesterday
They bore the Cross before you to
the chant of funeral hymns.

XIII.

'Libera me, Domine!' you sang the
Psalm, and when
The Priest pronounced you dead,
and flung the mould upon your
feet,
A beauty came upon your face, not
that of living men,
But seen upon the silent brow when
life has ceased to beat.

XIV.

'Libera nos, Domine'—you knew not
one was there
Who saw you kneel beside your bier,
and weeping scarce could see;
May I come a little nearer, I that heard,
and changed the prayer
And sang the married '*nos*' for the
solitary '*me*.'

XV.

My beauty marred by you? by you!
so be it. All is well
If I lose it and myself in the higher
beauty, yours.
My beauty lured that falcon from his
eyry on the fell,
Who never caught one gleam of the
beauty which endures—

XVI.

The Count who sought to snap the
bond that link'd us life to life,
Who whisper'd me 'your Ulric
loves'—a little nearer still—
He hiss'd, 'Let us revenge ourselves,
your Ulric woos my wife'—
A lie by which he thought he could
subdue me to his will.

XVII.

I knew that you were near me when I
let him kiss my brow;
Did he touch me on the lips? I was
jealous, anger'd, vain,
And I meant to make *you* jealous.
Are you jealous of me now?
Your pardon, O my love, if I ever
gave you pain.

XVIII.

You never once accused me, but I
wept alone, and sigh'd
In the winter of the Present for the
summer of the Past;
That icy winter silence—how it froze
you from your bride,
Tho' I made one barren effort to
break it at the last.

XIX.

I brought you, you remember, these
roses, when I knew
You were parting for the war, and
you took them tho' you frown'd;
You frown'd and yet you kiss'd them.
All at once the trumpet blew,
And you spurr'd your fiery horse,
and you hurl'd them to the
ground.

XX.

You parted for the Holy War without
a word to me,
And clear myself unask'd—not I.
My nature was too proud.
And him I saw but once again, and far
away was he,
When I was praying in a storm—the
crash was long and loud—

XXI.

That God would ever slant His bolt
from falling on your head—
Then I lifted up my eyes, he was
coming down the fell—
I clapt my hands. The sudden fire
from Heaven had dash'd him
dead,
And sent him charr'd and blasted
to the deathless fire of Hell.

XXII.

See, I sinn'd but for a moment. I re-
pent and repent,
And trust myself forgiven by the
God to whom I kneel.
A little nearer? Yes. I shall hardly
be content
Till I be leper like yourself, my love,
from head to heel.

XXIII.

O foolish dreams, that you, that I,
would slight our marriage oath:
I held you at that moment even
dearer than before;
Now God has made you leper in His
loving care for both,
That we might cling together, never
doubt each other more.

XXIV.

The Priest, who join'd you to the dead,
has join'd our hands of old;
If man and wife be but one flesh, let
mine be leprous too,
As dead from all the human race as if
beneath the mould;
If you be dead, then I am dead, who
only live for you.

XXV.

Would Earth tho' hid in cloud not be
follow'd by the Moon?
The leech forsake the dying bed for
terror of his life?
The shadow leave the Substance in the
brooding light of noon?
Or if I had been the leper would
you have left the wife?

XXVI.

Not take them? Still you wave me off
—poor roses—must I go—
I have worn them year by year—
from the bush we both had set—
What? fling them to you?—well—that
were hardly gracious. No!
Your plague but passes by the touch.
A little nearer yet!

XVII.

There, there! he buried you, the
Priest; the Priest is not to
blame,
He joins us once again, to his either
office true:
I thank him. I am happy, happy.
Kiss me. In the name
Of the everlasting God, I will live
and die with you.

[DEAN MILMAN has remarked that the protection and care afforded by the Church to this blighted race of lepers was among the most beautiful of its offices during the Middle Ages. The leprosy of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was supposed to be a legacy of the crusades, but was in all probability the offspring of meagre and unwholesome diet, miserable lodging and clothing, physical and moral degradation. The services of the Church in the seclusion of these unhappy sufferers were most affecting. The stern duty of looking to the public welfare is tempered with exquisite compassion for the victims of this loathsome disease. The ritual for the sequestration of the leprous differed little from the burial service. After the leper had been sprinkled with holy water, the priest conducted him into the church, the leper singing the psalm 'Libera me domine,' and the crucifix and bearer going before. In the church a black cloth was stretched over two trestles in front of the altar, and the leper leaning at its side devoutly heard mass. The priest, taking up a little earth in his cloak, threw it on one of the leper's feet, and put him out of the church, if it did not rain too heavily; took him to his hut in the midst of the fields, and then uttered the prohibitions: 'I forbid you entering the church

.... or entering the company of others. I forbid you quitting your home without your leper's dress.' He concluded: 'Take this dress, and wear it in token of humility; take these gloves, take this clapper, as a sign that you are forbidden to speak to any one. You are not to be indignant at being thus separated from others, and as to your little wants, good people will provide for you, and God will not desert you.' Then in this old ritual follow these sad words: 'When it shall come to pass that the leper shall pass out of this world, he shall be buried in his hut, and not in the churchyard.' At first there was a doubt whether wives should follow their husbands who had been leprous, or remain in the world and marry again. The church decided that the marriage-tie was indissoluble, and so bestowed on these unhappy beings this immense source of consolation. With a love stronger than this living death, lepers were followed into banishment from the haunts of men by their faithful wives. Readers of Sir J. Stephen's *Essays on Ecclesiastical Biography* will recollect the description of the founder of the Franciscan order, how, controlling his involuntary disgust, St. Francis of Assisi washed the feet and dressed the sores of the lepers, once at least reverently applying his lips to their wounds.—BOUCHER-JAMES.]

This ceremony of *quasi*-burial varied considerably at different times and in different places. In some cases a grave was dug, and the leper's face was often covered during the service.

TO ULYSSES.¹

I.

ULYSSES, much-experienced man,
Whose eyes have known this
globe of ours,
Her tribes of men, and trees, and
flowers,
From Corrientes to Japan,

¹ 'Ulysses,' the title of a number of essays by W. G. Palgrave. He died at Monte Video before seeing my poem.

II.

To you that bask below the Line,
 I soaking here in winter wet—
 The century's three strong eights
 have met
 To drag me down to seventy-nine

III.

In summer if I reach my day—
 To you, yet young, who breathe the
 balm
 Of summer-winters by the palm
 And orange grove of Paraguay,

IV.

I tolerant of the colder time,
 Who love the winter woods, to trace
 On paler heavens the branching
 grace
 Of leafless elm, or naked lime,

V.

And see my cedar green, and there
 My giant ilex keeping leaf
 When frost is keen and days are
 brief—
 Or marvel how in English air

VI.

My yucca, which no winter quells,
 Altho' the months have scarce
 begun,
 Has push'd toward our faintest sun
 A spike of half-accomplish'd bells—

VII.

Or watch the waving pine which here
 The warrior of Caprera set,¹
 A name that earth will not forget
 Till earth has roll'd her latest year—

VIII.

I, once half-crazed for larger light
 On broader zones beyond the foam,
 But chaining fancy now at home
 Among the quarried downs of Wight,

¹ Garibaldi said to me, alluding to his barren island, 'I wish I had your trees.'

IX.

Not less would yield full thanks to you
 For your rich gift, your tale of lands
 I know not,¹ your Arabian sands;
 Your cane, your palm, tree-fern, bam-
 boo,

X.

The wealth of tropic bower and brake;
 Your Oriental Eden-isles,²
 Where man, nor only Nature smiles;
 Your wonder of the boiling lake;³

XI.

Phra-Chai, the Shadow of the Best,⁴
 Phra-bat⁵ the step; your Pontic
 coast;
 Crag-cloister;⁶ Anatolian Ghost;⁷
 Hong-Kong,⁸ Karnac,⁹ and all the
 rest.

XII.

Thro' which I follow'd line by line
 Your leading hand, and came, my
 friend,
 To prize your various book, and
 send
 A gift of slenderer value, mine.

TO MARY BOYLE.

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM.

I.

'SPRING-FLOWERS'! While you still
 delay to take
 Your leave of Town,

¹ The tale of Nejd. ² The Philippines.

³ In Dominica.

⁴ The shadow of the Lord. Certain obscure markings on a rock in Siam, which express the image of Buddha to the Buddhist more or less distinctly according to his faith and his moral worth.

⁵ The footstep of the Lord on another rock. ⁶ The monastery of Sumelas.

⁷ Anatolian Spectre stories.

⁸ The Three Cities. ⁹ Travels in Egypt.

Our elm tree's ruddy-hearted blossom-
flake
Is fluttering down.

II.

Be truer to your promise. There! I
heard
Our cuckoo call.
Be needle to the magnet of your word,
Nor wait, till all

III.

Our vernal bloom from every vale and
plain
And garden pass,
And all the gold from each laburnum
chain
Drop to the grass.

IV.

Is memory with your Marian gone to
rest,
Dead with the dead?
For ere she left us, when we met, you
prest
My hand, and said

V.

'I come with your spring-flowers.
You came not, friend;
My birds would sing,
You heard not. Take then this spring-
flower I send,
This song of spring,

VI.

Found yesterday—forgotten mine own
rhyme
By mine old self,
As I shall be forgotten by old Time,
Laid on the shelf—

VII.

A rhyme that flower'd betwixt the
whitening sloe
And kingcup blaze,
And more than half a hundred years
ago,
In rick-fire days,

VIII.

When Dives loathed the times, and
paced his land
In fear of worse,
And sanguine Lazarus felt a vacant
hand
Fill with *his* purse.

IX.

For lowly minds were madden'd to
the height
By tonguester tricks,
And once—I well remember that red
night
When thirty ricks,

X.

All flaming, made an English home-
stead Hell—
These hands of mine
Have helpt to pass a bucket from the
well
Along the line,

XI.

When this bare dome had not begun
to gleam
Thro' youthful curls,
And you were then a lover's fairy
dream,
His girl of girls;

XII.

And you, that now are lonely, and with
Grief
Sit face to face,
Might find a flickering glimmer of
relief
In change of place.

XIII.

What use to brood? this life of
mingled pains
And joys to me,
Despite of every Faith and Creed,
remains
The Mystery.

XIV.

Let golden youth bewail the friend,
 the wife,
 For ever gone.
 He dreams of that long walk thro'
 desert life
 Without the one.

XV.

The silver year should cease to mourn
 and sigh—
 Not long to wait—
 So close are we, dear Mary, you and I
 To that dim gate.

XVI.

Take, read! and be the faults your
 Poet makes
 Or many or few,
 He rests content, if his young music
 wakes
 A wish in you

XVII.

To change our dark Queen-city, all
 her realm
 Of sound and smoke,
 For his clear heaven, and these few
 lanes of elm
 And whispering oak.

THE PROGRESS OF SPRING.

I.

THE groundflame of the crocus breaks
 the mould,
 Fair Spring slides hither o'er the
 Southern sea,
 Wavers on her thin stem the snow-
 drop cold
 That trembles not to kisses of the
 bee:
 Come, Spring, for now from all the
 dripping eaves
 The spear of ice has wept itself
 away,
 And hour by hour unfolding woodbine
 leaves

O'er his uncertain shadow droops
 the day.
 She comes! The loosen'd rivulets
 run;
 The frost-bead melts upon her
 golden hair;
 Her mantle, slowly greenening in the
 Sun,
 Now wraps her close, now arching
 leaves her bare
 To breaths of balmier air;

II.

Up leaps the lark, gone wild to wel-
 come her,
 About her glance the tits, and shriek
 the jays,
 Before her skims the jubilant wood-
 pecker,
 The linnet's bosom blushes at her
 gaze,
 While round her brows a woodland
 culver flits,
 Watching her large light eyes and
 gracious looks,
 And in her open palm a halcyon sits
 Patient—the secret splendor of the
 brooks.
 Come, Spring! She comes on waste
 and wood,
 On farm and field: but enter also
 here,
 Diffuse thyself at will thro' all my
 blood,
 And, tho' thy violet sicken into sere,
 Lodge with me all the year!

III.

Once more a downy drift against the
 brakes,
 Self-darken'd in the sky, descending
 slow!
 But gladly see I thro' the wavering
 flakes
 Von blanching apricot like snow in
 snow.
 These will thine eyes not brook in
 forest-paths,
 On their perpetual pine, nor round
 the beech;
 They fuse themselves to little spicy
 baths,

Solved in the tender blushes of the
peach;
They lose themselves and die
On that new life that gems the haw-
thorn line;
Thy gay lent-lilies wave and put them
by,
And out once more in varnish'd
glory shine
Thy stars of celandine.

IV.

She floats across the hamlet. Heaven
lours,
But in the tearful splendor of her
smiles
I see the slowly-thickening chestnut
towers
Fill out the spaces by the barren
tiles.
Now past her feet the swallow cir-
cling flies,
A clamorous cuckoo stoops to meet
her hand;
Her light makes rainbows in my
closing eyes,
I hear a charm of song thro' all the
land.
Come, Spring! She comes, and
Earth is glad
To roll her North below thy deepen-
ing dome,
But ere thy maiden birk be wholly
clad,
And these low bushes dip their
twigs in foam,
Make all true hearths thy home.

V.

Across my garden! and the thicket
stirs,
The fountain pulses high in sunnier
jets,
The blackcap warbles, and the turtle
purrs,
The starling claps his tiny castanets.
Still round her forehead wheels the
woodland dove,
And scatters on her throat the
sparks of dew,
The kingcup fills her footprint, and
above

Broaden the glowing isles of vernal
blue.
Hail ample presence of a Queen,
Bountiful, beautiful, apparell'd gay,
Whose mantle, every shade of glancing
green,
Flies back in fragrant breezes to
display
A tunic white as May!

VI.

She whispers, 'From the South I
bring you balm,
For on a tropic mountain was I
born,
While some dark dweller by the coco-
palm
Watch'd my far meadow zoned
with airy morn;
From under rose a muffled moan of
floods;
I sat beneath a solitude of snow;
There no one came, the turf was
fresh, the woods
Plunged gulf on gulf thro' all their
vales below.
I saw beyond their silent tops
The steaming marshes of the scar-
let cranes,
The slant seas leaning on the man-
grove copse,
And summer basking in the sultry
plains
About a land of canes;

VII.

'Then from my vapor girdle soaring
forth
I scaled the buoyant highway of
the birds,
And drank the dews and drizzle of
the North,
That I might mix with men, and
hear their words
On pathway'd plains; for—while my
hand exults
Within the bloodless heart of lowly
flowers
To work old laws of Love to fresh
results,
Thro' manifold effect of simple
powers—

I too would teach the man
 Beyond the darker hour to see the
 bright,
 That his fresh life may close as it
 began,
 The still-fulfilling promise of a
 light
 Narrowing the bounds of night.'

VIII.

So wed thee with my soul, that I may
 mark
 The coming year's great good and
 varied ills,
 And new developments, whatever
 spark
 Be struck from out the clash of
 warring wills;
 Or whether, since our nature cannot
 rest,
 The smoke of war's volcano burst
 again
 From hoary deeps that belt the
 changeful West,
 Old Empires, dwellings of the kings
 of men;
 Or should those fail, that hold the
 helm,
 While the long day of knowledge
 grows and warms,
 And in the heart of this most ancient
 realm
 A hateful voice be utter'd, and
 alarms
 Sounding 'To arms! to arms!'

IX

A simpler, saner lesson might he
 learn
 Who reads thy gradual process,
 Holy Spring.
 Thy leaves possess the season in
 their turn,
 And in their time thy warblers rise
 on wing.
 How surely glidest thou from March
 to May,
 And changest, breathing it, the
 sullen wind,
 Thy scope of operation, day by day,
 Larger and fuller, like the human
 mind!

Thy warmths from bud to bud
 Accomplish that blind model in the
 seed,
 And men have hopes, which race the
 restless blood,
 That after many changes may suc-
 ceed
 Life, which is Life indeed.

MERLIN AND THE GLEAM.

I.

O YOUNG Mariner,
 You from the haven
 Under the sea-cliff,
 You that are watching
 The gray Magician
 With eyes of wonder,
I am Merlin,
 And *I* am dying,
I am Merlin
 Who follow The Glean.

II.

Mighty the Wizard
 Who found me at sunrise
 Sleeping, and woke me
 And learn'd me Magic!
 Great the Master,
 And sweet the Magic,
 When over the valley,
 In early summers,
 Over the mountain,
 On human faces,
 And all around me,
 Moving to melody,
 Floated The Glean.

III.

Once at the croak of a Raven
 who crost it,
 A barbarous people,
 Blind to the magic,
 And deaf to the melody,
 Snarl'd at and cursed me.
 A demon vext me,
 The light retreated,
 The landskip darken'd,
 The melody deaden'd,
 The Master whisper'd
 'Follow The Glean.'

IV.

Then to the melody,
Over a wilderness
Gliding, and glancing at
Elf of the woodland,
Gnome of the cavern,
Griffin and Giant,
And dancing of Fairies
In desolate hollows,
And wraiths of the mountain,
And rolling of dragons
By warble of water,
Or cataract music
Of falling torrents,
Flitted The Gleam.

V.

Down from the mountain
And over the level,
And streaming and shining on
Silent river,
Silvery willow,
Pasture and plowland,
Innocent maidens,
Garrulous children,
Homestead and harvest,
Reaper and gleaner,
And rough-ruddy faces
Of lowly labor,
Slided The Gleam—

VI.

Then, with a melody
Stronger and statelier,
Led me at length
To the city and palace
Of Arthur the king;
Touch'd at the golden
Cross of the churches
Flash'd on the Tournament,
Flicker'd and bicker'd
From helmet to helmet,
And last on the forehead
Of Arthur the blameless
Rested The Gleam.

VII.

Clouds and darkness
Closed upon Camelot;
Arthur had vanish'd
I knew not whither,

The king who loved me,
And cannot die;
For out of the darkness
Silent and slowly
The Gleam, that had waned to
a wintry glimmer
On icy fallow
And faded forest,
Drew to the valley
Named of the shadow,
And slowly brightening
Out of the glimmer,
And slowly moving again to a
melody
Yearningly tender,
Fell on the shadow,
No longer a shadow,
But clothed with The Gleam.

VIII.

And broader and brighter
The Gleam flying onward,
Wed to the melody,
Sang thro' the world;
And slower and fainter,
Old and weary,
But eager to follow,
I saw, whenever
In passing it glanced upon
Hamlet or city,
That under the Crosses
The dead man's garden,
The mortal hillock,
Would break into blossom;
And so to the land's
Last limit I came—
And can no longer,
But die rejoicing,
For thro' the Magic
Of Him the Mighty,
Who taught me in childhood,
There on the border
Of boundless Ocean,
And all but in Heaven
Hovers The Gleam.

IX.

Not of the sunlight,
Not of the moonlight,
Not of the starlight!
O young Mariner,
Down to the haven,

Call your companions,
Launch your vessel,
And crowd your canvas,
And, ere it vanishes
Over the margin,
After it, follow it,
Follow The Gleam.

ROMNEY'S REMORSE.

'I READ Hayley's Life of Romney the other day—Romney wanted but education and reading to make him a very fine painter; but his ideal was not high nor fixed. How touching is the close of his life! He married at nineteen, and because Sir Joshua and others had said that "marriage spoilt an artist" almost immediately left his wife in the North and scarce saw her till the end of his life; when old, nearly mad and quite desolate, he went back to her and she received him and nursed him till he died. This quiet act of hers is worth all Romney's pictures! even as a matter of Art, I am sure.' (*Letters and Literary Remains of Edward Fitzgerald*, vol. i.)

'BEAT, little heart—I give you this
and this'

Who are you? What! the Lady
Hamilton?

Good, I am never weary painting you.
To sit once more? Cassandra, Hebe,
Joan,

Or spinning at your wheel beside the
vine—

Bacchante, what you will; and if I
fail

To conjure and concentrate into form
And color all you are, the fault is less
In me than Art. What Artist ever
yet

Could make pure light live on the
canvas? Art!

Why should I so disrelish that short
word?

Where am I? snow on all the hills!
so hot,

So fever'd! never colt would more
delight

To roll himself in meadow grass than
I

To wallow in that winter of the hills.

Nurse, were you hired? or came of
your own will

To wait on one so broken, so forlorn?
Have I not met you somewhere long
ago?

I am all but sure I have—in Kendal
church—

O yes! I hired you for a season there,
And then we parted; but you look so
kind

That you will not deny my sultry
throat

One draught of icy water. There—
you spill

The drops upon my forehead. Your
hand shakes.

I am ashamed. I am a trouble to
you,

Could kneel for your forgiveness.
Are they tears?

For me—they do me too much grace
—for me?

O Mary, Mary!

Vexing you with words!

Words only, born of fever, or the
fumes

Of that dark opiate dose you gave me,
—words,

Wild babble. I have stumbled back
again

Into the common day, the sounder
self.

God stay me there, if only for your
sake,

The truest, kindest, noblest-hearted
wife

That ever wore a Christian marriage-
ring.

My curse upon the Master's apo-
thegm,

That wife and children drag an Artist
down!

This seem'd my lodestar in the
Heaven of Art,

And lured me from the household fire
on earth.

To you my days have been a life-long
lie,

Grafted on half a truth; and tho' you
say

'Take comfort you have won the
Painter's fame,'

The best in me that sees the worst in
me,
And groans to see it, finds no comfort
there.

What fame? I am not Raphaël,
Titian—no

Nor even a Sir Joshua, some will cry.
Wrong there! The painter's fame?
but mine, that grew

Blown into glittering by the popular
breath,

May float awhile beneath the sun, may
roll

The rainbow hues of heaven about
it—

There!

The color'd bubble bursts above the
abyss

Of Darkness, utter Lethe.

Is it so?

Her sad eyes plead for my own fame
with me
To make it dearer.

Look, the sun has risen
To flame along another dreary day.
Your hand. How bright you keep
your marriage-ring!
Raise me. I thank you.

Has your opiate then
Bred this black mood? or am I
conscious, more
Than other Masters, of the chasm
between
Work and Ideal? Or does the gloom
of Age
And suffering cloud the height I
stand upon
Even from myself? stand? stood . . .
no more.

And yet
The world would lose, if such a wife
as you
Should vanish unrecorded. Might I
crave
One favor? I am bankrupt of all
claim
On your obedience, and my strongest
wish

Falls flat before your least unwilling-
ness.

Still would you—if it please you—sit
to me?

I dream'd last night of that clear
summer noon,
When seated on a rock, and foot to
foot

With your own shadow in the placid
lake,

You claspt our infant daughter, heart
to heart.

I had been among the hills, and
brought you down

A length of staghorn-moss, and this
you twined

About her cap. I see the picture yet,
Mother and child. A sound from far
away,

No louder than a bee among the
flowers,

A fall of water lull'd the noon asleep.
You still'd it for the moment with a
song

Which often echo'd in me, while I
stood

Before the great Madonna-master-
pieces

Of ancient Art in Paris, or in Rome.

Mary, my crayons! if I can, I will.
You should have been—I might have
made you once,

Had I but known you as I know you
now—

The true Alcestis of the time. Your
song—

Sit, listen! I remember it, a proof
That I—even I—at times remember'd
you.

'Beat upon mine, little heart! beat,
beat!

Beat upon mine! you are mine, my
sweet!

All mine from your pretty blue
eyes to your feet,

My sweet.'

Less profile! turn to me—three-quar-
ter face.

'Sleep, little blossom, my honey,
my bliss!

For I give you this, and I give you
this!

And I blind your pretty blue eyes
with a kiss!

Sleep!

Too early blinded by the kiss of
death—

‘Father and Mother will watch you
grow’—

You watch’d not I, she did not grow,
she died.

‘Father and Mother will watch you
grow,

And gather the roses whenever
they blow,

And find the white heather wher-
ever you go,

My sweet.’

Ah, my white heather only blooms in
heaven

With Milton’s amaranth. There,
there, there! a child

Had shamed me at it—Down, you idle
tools,

Stamp’d into dust—tremulous, all
awry,

Blurr’d like a landskip in a ruffled
pool,—

Not one stroke firm. This Art, that
harlot-like

Seduced me from you, leaves me har-
lot-like,

Who love her still, and whimper, im-
potent

To win her back before I die—and
then—

Then, in the loud world’s bastard
judgment-day,

One truth will damn me with the
mindless mob,

Who feel no touch of my temptation,
more

Than all the myriad lies, that blacken
round

The corpse of every man that gains a
name;

‘This model husband, this fine
Artist’! Fool,

What matters? Six foot deep of
burial mould

Will dull their comments! Ay, but
when the shout

Of His descending peals from Heaven,
and throbs

Thro’ earth, and all her graves, if *He*
should ask

‘Why left you wife and children? for
my sake,

According to my word?’ and I
replied

‘Nay, Lord, for *Art*,’ why, that would
sound so mean

That all the dead, who wait the doom
of Hell

For bolder sins than mine, adulteries,
Wife-murders,—nay, the ruthless

Mussulman
Who flings his bowstrung Harem in
the sea,

Would turn, and glare at me, and
point and jeer,

And gibber at the worm, who, living,
made

The wife of wives a widow-bride, and
lost

Salvation for a sketch.

I am wild again!

The coals of fire you heap upon my
head

Have crazed me. Someone knock-
ing there without?

No! Will my Indian brother come?
to find

Me or my coffin? Should I know the
man?

This worn-out Reason dying in her
house

May leave the windows blinded, and
if so,

Bid him farewell for me, and tell
him—

Hope!

I hear a death-bed Angel whisper
‘Hope.’

“The miserable have no medicine
But only Hope!” He said it . . .

in the play.

His crime was of the senses; of the
mind

Mine; worse, cold, calculated.

Tell my son—

O let me lean my head upon your
breast.
'Beat little heart' on this fool brain
of mine.
I once had friends—and many—none
like you.
I love you more than when we mar-
ried. Hope!
O yes, I hope, or fancy that, per-
haps,
Human forgiveness touches heaven,
and thence—
For you forgive me, you are sure of
that—
Reflected, sends a light on the for-
given.

PARNASSUS.

Exegi monumentum . . .
Quod non . . .
Possit diruere . . .
. . . innumerabilis
Annorum series et fuga temporum.—
HORACE.

I.

WHAT be those crown'd forms high
over the sacred fountain?
Bards, that the mighty Muses have
raised to the heights of the
mountain,
And over the flight of the Ages! O
Goddesses, help me up thither!
Lightning may shrivel the laurel of
Cæsar, but mine would not
wither.
Steep is the mountain, but you, you
will help me to overcome it,
And stand with my head in the
zenith, and roll my voice from
the summit,
Sounding for ever and ever thro'
Earth and her listening na-
tions,
And mixt with the great Sphere-
music of stars and of constella-
tions.

II.

What be those two shapes high over
the sacred fountain,
Taller than all the Muses, and huger
than all the mountain?
On those two known peaks they stand
ever spreading and heighten-
ing;
Poet, that evergreen laurel is blasted
by more than lightning!
Look, in their deep double shadow
the crown'd ones all disappear-
ing!
Sing like a bird and be happy, nor
hope for a deathless hearing!
'Sounding for ever and ever?' pass
on! the sight confuses—
These are Astronomy and Geology,
terrible Muses!

III.

If the lips were touch'd with fire from
off a pure Pierian altar,
Tho' their music here be mortal need
the singer greatly care?
Other songs for other worlds! the fire
within him would not falter;
Let the golden Iliad vanish, Homer
here is Homer there.

BY AN EVOLUTIONIST.

THE Lord let the house of a brute to
the soul of a man,
And the man said 'Am I your
debtor?'
And the Lord—'Not yet: but make
it as clean as you can,
And then I will let you a better.'

I.

If my body come from brutes, my
soul uncertain, or a fable,
Why not bask amid the senses
while the sun of morning
shines,
I, the finer brute rejoicing in my
hounds, and in my stable,
Youth and Health, and birth and
wealth, and choice of women
and of wines?

II.

What hast thou done for me, grim
Old Age, save breaking my
bones on the rack?

Would I had past in the morning
that looks so bright from afar!

OLD AGE.

Done for thee? starved the wild
beast that was linkt with thee
eighty years back.

Less weight now for the ladder-of-
heaven that hangs on a star.

I.

If my body come from brutes, tho'
somewhat finer than their own,
I am heir, and this my kingdom.
Shall the royal voice be mute?

No, but if the rebel subject seek to
drag me from the throne,

Hold the sceptre, Human Soul, and
rule thy Province of the brute.

II.

I have climb'd to the snows of Age,
and I gaze at a field in the
Past,

Where I sank with the body at
times in the sloughs of a low
desire,

But I hear no yelp of the beast, and
the Man is quiet at last

As he stands on the heights of his
life with a glimpse of a height
that is higher.

FAR—FAR—AWAY.

(FOR MUSIC.)

WHAT sight so lured him thro' the
fields he knew

As where earth's green stole into
heaven's own hue,

Far—far—away?

What sound was dearest in his na-
tive dells?

The mellow lin-lan-lone of evening
bells

Far—far—away.

What vague world-whisper, mystic
pain or joy,

Thro' those three words would haunt
him when a boy,

Far—far—away?

A whisper from his dawn of life? a
breath

From some fair dawn beyond the
doors of death

Far—far—away?

Far, far, how far? from o'er the gates
of Birth,

The faint horizons, all the bounds of
earth,

Far—far—away?

What charm in words, a charm no
words could give?

O dying words, can Music make you
live

Far—far—away?

POLITICS.

WE move, the wheel must always
move,

Nor always on the plain,
And if we move to such a goal

As Wisdom hopes to gain,
Then you that drive, and know your
Craft,

Will firmly hold the rein,
Nor lend an ear to random cries,

Or you may drive in vain,
For some cry 'Quick' and some cry
'Slow,'

But, while the hills remain,
Up hill 'Too-slow' will need the
whip,

Down hill 'Too-quick,' the chain.

BEAUTIFUL CITY.

BEAUTIFUL city, the centre and crater
of European confusion,

O you with your passionate shriek for
the rights of an equal human-
ity,
How often your Re-volution has
proven but E-volution
Roll'd again back on itself in the tides
of a civic insanity!

THE ROSES ON THE TERRACE.

ROSE, on this terrace fifty years ago,
When I was in my June, you in
your May,
Two words, '*My* Rose' set all your
face aglow,
And now that I am white, and you
are gray,
That blush of fifty years ago, my
dear,
Blooms in the Past, but close to me
to-day
As this red rose, which on our terrace
here
Glow in the blue of fifty miles
away.

THE PLAY.

ACT first, this Earth, a stage so
gloom'd with woe
You all but sicken at the shifting
scenes.
And yet be patient. Our Playwright
may show
In some fifth Act what this wild
Drama means.

ON ONE WHO AFFECTED AN EFFEMINATE MANNER.

WHILE man and woman still are in-
complete,
I prize that soul where man and
woman meet,
Which types all Nature's male and
female plan,
But, friend, man-woman is not woman-
man.

TO ONE WHO RAN DOWN THE ENGLISH.

YOU make our faults too gross, and
thence maintain
Our darker future. May your fears
be vain!
At times the small black fly upon the
pane
May seem the black ox of the distant
plain.

THE SNOWDROP.

MANY, many welcomes
February fair-maid,
Ever as of old time,
Solitary firstling,
Coming in the cold time,
Prophet of the gay time,
Prophet of the May time,
Prophet of the roses,
Many, many welcomes
February fair-maid!

THE THROSTLE.

'SUMMER is coming, summer is com-
ing.
I know it, I know it, I know it.
Light again, leaf again, life again, love
again,'
Yes, my wild little Poet.
Sing the new year in under the blue.
Last year you sang it as gladly.
'New, new, new, new'! Is it then *so*
new
That you should carol so madly?
'Love again, song again, nest again,
young again,'
Never a prophet so crazy!
And hardly a daisy as yet, little
friend,
See, there is hardly a daisy.
'Here again, here, here, here, happy
year!'

O warble unchidden, unbidden !
 Summer is coming, is coming, my
 dear,
 And all the winters are hidden.

THE OAK.

LIVE thy Life,
 Young and old,
 Like yon oak,
 Bright in spring,
 Living gold;

Summer-rich
 Then ; and then
 Autumn-changed,
 Soberer-hued
 Gold again.

All his leaves
 Fall'n at length,
 Look, he stands,
 Trunk and bough,
 Naked strength.

IN MEMORIAM.

W. G. WARD.

FAREWELL, whose like on earth I
 shall not find,
 Whose Faith and Work were bells
 of full accord,

My friend, the most unworldly of
 mankind,
 Most generous of all Ultramon-
 tanes, Ward,
 How subtle at tierce and quart of
 mind with mind,
 How loyal in the following of thy
 Lord!

CROSSING THE BAR.

SUNSET and evening star,
 And one clear call for me !
 And may there be no moaning of the
 bar,
 When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems
 asleep,
 Too full for sound and foam,
 When that which drew from out the
 boundless deep
 Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
 And after that the dark !
 And may there be no sadness of fare-
 well,
 When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time
 and Place
 The flood may bear me far,
 I hope to see my Pilot face to face
 When I have crost the bar.

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